India

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Notes and News 97
A Thin Disguise 100
Gagging the Native Press of India, by E. H. Pickersgill, M.P. 101
The Deportation of the Natu Brothers: Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P., and the India Office 102
The Week in Parliament 103
India in Parliament: Debate on Mr. Lawson Walton's Amendment ... 104
Chronicle of the Week 111
Advertisements 112

NOTES AND NEWS.

OUR Calcutta correspondent telegraphed to us on Friday last as follows: "Indian and Anglo-Indian opinion unanimously condemns the Sedition Bill as revised by the Select Committee. The *Englishman*, the leading Anglo-Indian paper, says that no essential change has been made. More than thirty public bodies, European as well as Indian, in all parts of India, including the Calcutta Bar, which consists chiefly of Englishmen, condemn the Bill. Mr. Chalmers's statement that the Select Committee has accepted the suggestions of the Chamber of Commerce is challenged." This telegram, which was immediately communicated to the Press and printed in many journals in London and in the provinces, usefully indicates the hostility that has been provoked throughout India by the fiercely repressive measures which the Government of India proposes to rush into law.

The Calcutta correspondent of the *Times* telegraphed on February 4: "The Bill comes up for disposal a fortnight hence." What is the reason—or, rather, excuse—for this amazing haste? As yet the proposals of the Government of India have not reached this country in a clear and concise form. In order to understand the changes which are contemplated one must bring together: (1) the existing law; (2) the proposals of the Government of India as stated in the *Gazette of India;* and (3) the amendments suggested by the Select Committee, as reported in incomplete and unofficial telegrams. That is to say, the Bill "comes up for disposal" to-day or to-morrow, although it is impossible for a member of Parliament, or any other dutiful observer at home, to ascertain precisely what the provisions of the Bill are. It may be said that this is the ordinary procedure—that the matter is in the discretion not of Parliament but of the Viceroy's Council. To that statement, if it were made, we should entirely demur. Nobody objects if the Viceroy's Council enacts minor measures under circumstances in which it is impossible for the House of Commons to be fully aware of their contents. But a totally different set of considerations applies where, as in the present case, a revolutionary enactment of the most intolerable and perilous type menaces the stability of British rule in India.

On another page we print an article by Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, M.P., upon the proposals of the Government of India. The chief objections to the new legislation are well summarised in the protest of the Bombay Presidency Association, which, on account of the Government's haste, it was necessary to telegraph to Calcutta:—

Council, Bombay Presidency Association begs to submit Criminal Procedure Bill objectionable and retrogressive as increasing powers of police, curtailing powers of courts and unduly encroaching upon liberty of subject. Respectfully protests against curtailment of revisional powers of High Court whose jurisdiction under Section 439 Procedure Code and the Charter to interfere in revision on examination of criminal returns or otherwise even though no appeal made is very necessary and salutary and should be kept intact, any attempt to curtail these powers being looked upon with great alarm. Objects strongly to depriving Appellate Courts of power to revoke sanctions given under Section 195 and High Court's power to revise orders for prosecution under Section 476. Deprecates withholding under Section 162 use of statements made by witnesses before the police as it deprives accused persons of a proper test of veracity of witnesses. All High Courts except Allahabad admit such statements in evidence, the law should therefore follow the practice of the majority of the High Courts. Considers highly objectionable the amendments to Sections 208, 256, 257 practically compelling accused persons to disclose their defence by cross-examination of witnesses instead of reserving it and being entitled to recall witnesses after entering into defence, similarly the power in magistrates to examine defence witnesses after committal under Section 212. Objects to village police being empowered to arrest and detain people for more than twenty-four hours under Sections 54 and 68, and police superintendents being invested with certain powers up to now only vested in magistrates under Sections 83 to 86, and to Presidency magistrates being made in certain respects subordinate to the Chief Presidency magistrate and thus making them less independent. Protests against power under Section 110 to ask security for good behaviour when a person considered of a dangerous and desperate character as too vague and likely to prove an instrument of oppression in the hands of the police, also against the substitution of police surveillance for security bond even when accused willing to give bond under Section 118 and against allowing confessions being recorded under Section 164 before subordinate and lowly paid magistrates other than those entitled to try the case as opposed to the views of the High Courts expressed from time to time. Regrets omission to amend Section 275 enabli g Indian tried at the High Court Sessions to insist upon majority of jury being his own countrymen as he can do in the mofussil and prays it be s) amended. Council protests against amendments in sedition law being hurriedly referred to Select Committee before publication and sufficient time for public to make representations. Objects to the vagueness and stringency of the proposed law and to introducing what is called the English law without English safeguards and protests against sedition trials being entrusted to Magistrates. Provision empowering Magistrates under Section 108 Criminal Procedure Code, to ask persons in their opinion disseminating seditious or defamatory matter to give security is calculated to work harshly and amounts to a virtual revival of the Vernacular Press Act and should be abandoned. Proposed amendment of Section 505 Penal Code highly objectionable as *bona fide* statements not protected. Detailed representations on the above and other points in the Criminal Procedure Bill and Sedition law are being prepared and will be sent early. Council fervently hopes sufficient time for public discussion will be given before consideration of Select Committee's reports. Requests in the meantime placing this telegram before the Select Committee and Council.

We have in former issues given extracts from the Anglo-Indian Press condemning the reactionary proposals of the Government. It is satisfactory to find, from the Anglo-Indian journals which came to hand by the last mail, that these protests have increased in number and in strength. For example, the *Times of India* says: "It is difficult to see why the law as it stands cannot be depended upon for the defence of the State against those who by speech and writing endeavour to disturb its peace." And again: "There is a great deal too much of the spirit of the *police des mœurs* in this to make it compatible with our view of the way in which a British administration shall keep the peace. . . . We object strongly to a proposal which would convert every policeman in the country into an eavesdropper, eager to pick up —or invent—any scrap of conversation that may be turned to account for the undoing of any man whom he may think it possible to bring into disfavour with the authorities." The *Times of India* stigmatizes the Government's proposals as "unnecessary and ill-advised," and an attempt to "make one of the chapters of the Criminal Procedure Code an engine for vexation and possible injustice." Similarly, the *Englishman* points out that the Anglo-Indian Defence Association condemns the new measure "at every point" as a "useless and perilous innovation." The significance of censure like this cannot be exaggerated. It is very much as if in this country Mr. Balfour should denounce a measure introduced by Lord Salisbury.

We regret that we are compelled to go to press this week before the debate takes place in the House of Commons upon the important amendments of which Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P., and Mr. Herbert Roberts, M.P., have given notice. Sir W. Wedderburn's amendment is as follows:—

As an amendment to the Address, at end, add:—And we humbly pray that Your Majesty, looking to the miseries patiently endured by the Indian people from famine, plague, poverty, and other afflictions during the past year, will graciously direct that special forbearance be shown towards them, and that careful enquiry be made into their present condition in order to restore confidence among the suffering

masses, and thus prepare the way for healing measures tending to bring back peace and prosperity.

And Mr. Herbert Roberts will move:—

As an amendment to the Address, at end, add:—And we humbly assure Your Majesty that this House regards with grave concern the policy of internal repression lately adopted by the Government of India, and especially the deportation and continued imprisonment of British Indian subjects without trial, the recent series of Press prosecutions, and the present proposals to increase the severity of the Law relating to sedition in India.

At the time of writing (Thursday afternoon) it is understood that Sir William will be called upon to speak immediately on the conclusion of the debate upon Mr. Dillon's amendment, and it is anticipated that a division will be taken upon Mr. Herbert Roberts's amendment. In view of the debate a whip was issued on Wednesday to the members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. We hear also that an official Liberal whip has been issued, urging Liberal members to be in their places.

Those who expected that the division upon Mr. Lawson Walton's amendment would lead to cross-voting reckoned without the discipline of the Tory party. It is true that two Unionists—Mr. Shaw-Stewart and Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell—were accidentally locked in the Liberal lobby. It is also true that Sir Charles Dilke abstained from voting. But, apart from these incidents, the division was taken on strict party lines.

Two matters of personal interest arising out of the debate may be mentioned. In the first place, Lord George Hamilton's egregious failure on Monday was emphasised by Mr. Curzon's comparatively successful, and certainly interesting, speech on Tuesday. At the conclusion of Mr. Curzon's speech, Parliamentary gossip once more marked him out as the next Tory Secretary of State for India. Talk of this kind is not to be treated very seriously. But it may perhaps be taken as indicating some dissatisfaction on the Tory benches with existing arrangements. In the second place, it is interesting to note that neither on Monday nor on Tuesday did Mr. Chamberlain take part in the debate. Yet his colleagues on the Treasury Bench were in sore need of help from an effective debater, especially after Mr. Asquith's speech—which by the way, experienced Parliamentary observers do not hesitate to include among its distinguished author's most brilliant performances. But perhaps that is the very reason why Mr. Chamberlain sat still. To vary a phrase of Lord G. Hamilton's, "he kept silence—he likes to see his colleagues commit themselves." One thing is tolerably certain. If Mr Chamberlain had thought that the Government's policy and achievements on and beyond the North-West frontier were popular with the constituencies at home, he would have beaten the big drum with the best of them. His silence is significant.

Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., has been fortunate enough to secure in the House of Commons the first place next Tuesday evening (February 22) for a motion relating to India. He has accordingly given notice of motion in the following terms:—

To call attention to the bad condition of the finances of India, and to the poverty of the mass of the people; and to move a resolution.

We understand, however, that the motion is to be considerably expanded, and that an important division may be expected upon the question of a British contribution to the cost of the war beyond the North-West frontier.

The correspondence, which will be found on another page, between Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P., and the Secretary of State for India with reference to the detention of the brothers Natu leaves a matter of the first importance in a highly unsatisfactory position. So long ago as November 4 of last year Sir W. Wedderburn, as Chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, enquired of Lord G. Hamilton whether it was proposed to bring the prisoners to trial, or, if not, upon what grounds it was considered necessary to detain them further. The Natus had then been in custody for nearly four, as they have now been for more than six, months. The enquiry was referred, superfluously enough, to the Government of Bombay, and after further correspondence Lord G. Hamilton replied on February 8 that there was no present intention of bringing the suspects to trial. Sir W. Wedderburn, in the final letter which was written on Tuesday last, expresses his "profound regret" at this decision, and appeals to Lord G. Hamilton to "terminate proceedings which are causing much distress to the public mind in India, and which are of quite an exceptional kind looking to the ordinary course of British justice." It will be seen that Lord G. Hamilton takes great pains to lay the whole responsibility for the arrests upon Lord Sandhurst's Government. But on August 2 last he admitted in the House of Commons that his own sanction was obtained before the arrests were made, and nobody imagines that such a grave step would have been taken except with the approval, or at the instigation, of the Secretary of State.

Moreover, Lord G. Hamilton showed quite clearly in the House of Commons on August 5 the state of mind which had dictated this unusual policy. He said that the arrests would "unravel the plot" which led to the Poona assassinations. The theory which assumed the existence of such a plot has long since been dispersed and, especially after the conviction of Damodar Chapekar, there is not—so far as the public are aware—a single shred even of assumption to warrant the continued detention of the Natu brothers. That they should still be kept in custody without trial, and without the production of a definite charge against them, is monstrous. It is to be noted that, on the admission of the Secretary of State, the procedure originally adopted was not free from actual illegality. Regulation 25 of 1827 is an antiquated and oppressive enactment. But even its provisions did not satisfy the panic-stricken mood of our Jingoes last summer. They must needs attach the moveable as well as the immoveable property of their hapless victims. Sir W. Wedderburn called attention in his first letter to this illegality, which operated with peculiar harshness under the joint arrangements of the Hindu family. We gave prominence to the same point in INDIA some months ago. Lord G. Hamilton now states that the Bombay Government, acting upon legal advice, "has issued orders for the release of such items in the list of property attached as cannot legally be dealt with under the Regulation." The whole outrageous episode is, it seems to us, one which demands the prompt and severe attention of the House of Commons and the British public with whom, in the last analysis, the responsibility for this odious tyranny rests.

Mr. George Handasyde Dick's presidential address to the Philosophical Society of Glasgow, on "Indian Economics," deserves to be widely read and considered. He justly remarks that "there is nothing in the general attitude of the public of this country, and but little in the attitude of the Press, to lead to the assurance that the electorate of Great Britain recognises that its mastership of India carries with it the final responsibility for the just administration of India." On the contrary, the neglect of India by the House of Commons "is nothing short of discreditable." It would be well for the electorate to note his testimony to the qualities of the people of India.

The people of India, with some reservation regarding the inhabitants of the great cities, have been described by Markham as "singularly temperate, chaste, honest, peaceable, singularly docile, easily governed, and patient." So far as my residence among them is a guide, I confirm that opinion. I also desire to place on record the charitable benefactions of all classes and creeds. Several native Bombay merchants could be named who have, individually, given as much for philanthropic objects out of their own pockets as the total public subscription raised in Great Britain last year for famine relief in India. Nothing I know of in this country appears to me to approach the charitable liberality of the Indian people.

Of course Englishmen are entitled to the credit of the famine subscription. But this is to be said on the point:

The total of that subscription represents but 3d. per head to those who were actually starving in India, and, when regarded in the light of the fact that India is now sending Britain, in payment of interest on her gold debt, nearly double the actual wealth in commodities which was intended by borrower and lender, the British subscriptions must be viewed rather as proof of parsimony and regardlessness than of large-hearted helpfulness and sympathy to our distressed fellow subjects.

The closing of the mints, Mr. Dick regards as "probably the greatest blunder against India ever perpetrated by responsible statesmen."

Its effects on the trade of India are destructive, because it has, by law, made India's money uncertain and varying in international value almost daily, and has made it artificially scarce. Its scarcity enhances the loanable value of money to rates almost prohibitive of commerce at the export season. It encourages forgery. It has

deprived India of a par of exchange with every other nation of the world, and so has upset her business with China and Japan, the Straits, and all countries in the East, and has not given her a par of exchange with gold in the West. It has given India an inflated and artificial currency, having its national value in Indian law, and which, while passing by law at par over its bullion value in India, is useless for international monetary payments at much over one-half of its face value.

This is a sufficiently serious indictment if one follows out the significance of these propositions in the actual condition of the people of India. Now, what of a gold standard?

To seek a gold standard, which necessarily requires gold for its establishment, by a country having its last estimated annual surplus on balance of trade but Rx. 216,000 (C 8169, page 21), and that has large foreign debt, as well as large foreign payments to liquidate in gold out of its silver revenues, that has also a vast silver currency in circulation at much over its bullion value, as well as hoards of bullion silver in the hands of its people, appears a chimera of the brain indicative of total unacquaintance with the science of money and with recent monetary history.

The dangerous financial position of India has been confirmed by the incalculable and vacillating policy of the Government, with results which if "fully understood in this country, might arouse public indignation to a righteous, perhaps to a dangerous, point."

Mr. Dick presses strongly the need for both knowledge of and sympathy with India.

Until the mind of the British public gets to understand that Britain and India are one, tied up together in one common bundle for the common good, India, her people, and her affairs will fail of that sympathetic appreciation of her economic difficulties and disadvantages which is so readily given to all countries within the pale of the Empire; and even to Armenians, Cretans, Greeks—*et hoc genus omne.*

He exposes the outrageous system of military and civil expenditure:

To charge India with the cost of conquering herself in favour of British rule, and upon that conquest to establish a government where all the principal officials, civil and military, are foreign in race and religion—who practically regulate their own emoluments as well as the emoluments of the native *employés* of Government—the hewers of wood and drawers of water—surely this is to set up and establish a state of things requiring the abrogation of fundamental doctrines in economics.

His remarks on the debt of India, the railway policy, the land revenue and taxation, and the poverty of the country are incisive criticisms based on knowledge and sound judgment. The pamphlet ought to be widely circulated in the three kingdoms.

Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt addressed a meeting at Wanborough last Saturday in support of Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, the Liberal candidate in the Cricklade division of Wiltshire. In the first part of a speech which excited great enthusiasm Mr. Dutt denounced "the Jingo policy of useless, profitless, and wicked wars at the cost of the Indian taxpayer." Referring to the Blue-book which the Government had issued at the eleventh hour in its own defence, he said that it amounted to the excuse (*a*) "Please, sir, I won't do it again"; and (*b*) "Please, sir, the other fellow has done it, too." In the second part of his speech Mr. Dutt described with just severity, and with the authority of an experienced administrator, any attempt to gag the Press in India:—

In this country Parliament and hundreds of free institutions gave expression to the voice of the people; in India there was no proper representative Government, and the Press was virtually the only channel for the expression of the views, sentiments and wishes of the people. To gag the Press in India meant an attempt to govern the country without a knowledge of the feelings and opinions of the people. It would be to strike at the root of good government, to reject the support and co-operation of the people, and to substitute in its place a pure despotism which was unsuited to any portion of England's world-wide empire. He urged his hearers to denounce such a repressive measure, to oppose the Tory Government in its policy of war and its policy of coercion, and to support the Liberal party which had identified itself in India with peace, with good government, and with the extension of popular rights and privileges.

Mr. A. M. Bose is to be congratulated upon the number of invitations which he has received to address meetings in various parts of the country upon Indian questions. His engagements at present include the following:—February 16, Cambridge Liberal Association ("Forward Policy in India—the False and the True"); February 17, Sturton; February 19, Melbourn ("Who are the 'Little Englanders'?"); February 21, Wisbech ("India and the War Policy"); last week of February, various meetings in London, including one at Essex Hall; March 2, Cottenham ("The Honour of a Nation"); March 4, The Fabian Society; March 14, Peterborough ("Some Indian Problems"). Mr. Bose, who was lately elected a member of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, has received from the chairman of Mr. Richardson's Election Committee in S.E. Durham a letter tendering to him the hearty thanks of the party for his valuable help during the recent contest. "You are entitled," says the writer, "to a full share of the credit for the victory we have won." We understand also that Mr. Richardson has expressed his readiness to do anything he can in the House of Commons on behalf of India. Our Indian readers will, we are sure, be interested to see how energetically and successfully their cause is being pleaded in this country by gentlemen like Mr. Dutt and Mr. Bose.

Pleasant news comes from Bhopal, a native state in Central India. The new minister, Moulvie Abdul Jabbar Khan Bahadur, has put his shoulder to the wheel, and is earning the gratitude of the people and the esteem of British officials. The Governor General's agent has declared in Durbar that the people are happy and contented under the Moulvie's enlightened administration. It is sad to think that such men have no suitable career under British rule in India. The Moulvie was only a deputy-magistrate under the British Government, and retired on pension as a deputy-magistrate, as no higher sphere of usefulness was open to him. Now, in his old age, he lends his services to a native State, and has a chance of distinguishing himself as an administrator. The present system of virtually excluding the people of India from all high appointments in British India is not healthy.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* gives details of a revolting case in which a coolie-girl in Assam was waylaid and carried off by three coolies sent by a European planter, who wished to keep her as his mistress. A criminal case was instituted. The *Patrika* says:—

One of the coolies was arrested at the time and placed on his trial along with Mr. Ross. Both were convicted; but while the principal in the affair, Mr. Ross, was fined Rs. 50, the poor coolie, who had no alternative but to obey his master, was sent to gaol for three months. This may be technical justice, but the ethics of it is surely not intelligible to the ordinary mind.

This is a case which Englishmen in India ought without delay to sift to the bottom.

The landlords of Bengal are sometimes accused of want of public spirit and liberality. Those who bring this charge are apt to ignore the facts. During the present famine many landlords have distinguished themselves by their liberality, and we believe that the Mahárájá of Darbhanga's remissions of rent and contributions exceeded a hundred thousand pounds sterling. We have before us a list of the contributions of the Bengal landlords during the past year towards education, the supply of drinking water, and other useful public works. Four lakhs were spent on village tanks, a quarter of a lakh on scholarships, and over half a lakh on public buildings. Mahárájá Sir Jotendra Mohan Tagore contributed fifteen thousand rupees towards the encouragement of Sanscrit learning, and the total contributions and donations amount to over ten lakhs of rupees. For parsimonious men, it does not seem a bad record.

The Mahometan Educational Conference was not held this year. It is right, however, to note that this is no indication of backwardness. The postponement of the meeting is attributed to the fact that "in these times of distress the presence of members is required at their homes to look after the interests and well-being of their tenants and domestics"—the members being for the most part considerable zemindars, jaghirdars, and raisis. We are assured that education is being actively encouraged by provincial committees and sub-committees "in every part, province, district, and town." This is as it should be; and although the principal of "the only really national Mahometan Educational Institution in the whole of India," at Aligarh, has said some hard things of our own endeavours, we heartily rejoice at every step in the progress of Mahometan education. We are, therefore, also very glad to see that the Anjuman for encouraging education amongst the members of the Carnatic Family is active, recognising that "without proper education there can be no real progress." The right attitude was taken up by Mr. Mahomed Munir Sahib, when he told his hearers that "it rested with them, and them alone, to ameliorate their condition." If they go to work in this temper, they will very soon achieve praiseworthy results.

A THIN DISGUISE.

THE debate on Mr. Lawson Walton's amendment offers at least two or three points of a satisfactory nature. Much oratorical powder was burnt in vain, no doubt. But for one thing the debate showed very clearly—more clearly indeed than the division list—that both parties feel behind them in the undemonstrative constituencies a deep dissatisfaction, not to say disgust, at every aspect of the recent campaigns in the North-West. Perhaps nothing told more effectively upon the Government than the speech of a new member, Mr. Duckworth, who declared that in Lancashire the policy of the Government was opposed not only on commercial, but still more on moral grounds. What Lancashire thinks there can be no doubt the country in general thinks also on this point. Most noteworthy, too, is the contrast between the serious treatment of the subject by the Opposition and the shallow and shifty treatment of it by the Government. Sir William Harcourt, Sir Henry Fowler, and Mr. Asquith have pulverised Lord George Hamilton, Mr. Curzon, and Mr. Balfour, so far as the substantial merits of the question are concerned. We put all mere recrimination aside. If the Liberals are to blame for slackness in the past, that can be no excuse for like, or worse, slackness on the part of the Tories; and there is this fundamental difference in any case, that while the Tories are still defiant, subject to the temporary coercion of public opinion, the Liberals are repentant and declare frankly for a policy of restraint and peace. It is plain that the events of the North-West campaigning, as well as the arguments some of us have steadily pressed on the public attention, have made an impression. Though it may not sink so deep as the feelings engendered by the first or the second Afghan war, it may possibly ensure somewhat more cautious action on the frontier for a few years to come. But there is only too much reason to fear that under the surface of caution the policy of aggression, unless it be further checked, will continue to make stealthy advances, till we are suddenly plunged into all the foolish complications of yet another tribal war.

The important thing is to see what is in the mind of the Government—the authorities with whom rests the final arbitrament. Lord George took his punishment lying down, and only added to it when he braced himself to an attitude of defence. When he came to the future policy, he said :—

> I want to tell the forward men, "You may go so far and no farther." I want to tell those who hold other views, "You must come up to a certain line and there remain."

This looks conciliatory. But what does it mean? What is the "line" he contemplates? First, he sets aside Sir George White's fantastic idea of disarming the tribesmen, 200,000 in number, scattered over thousands of square miles of inaccessible mountains. Secondly, he "believes that no fresh administrative responsibility should be undertaken unless it is essential for the performance of obligations already entered into." To that extent he would "respect the tribal system of government and the tribal institutions." Thirdly, he admits that there is no good in acquiring advanced military posts unless they can be turned to practical use. Such is Lord George Hamilton's programme. What did Mr. Curzon say? He systematised the points of Tory policy in these terms:—

> It was absolutely necessary to have some relations with the tribes, and three things were essential. We must, in the first place, have means of communication by the main roads and passes; secondly, we must control the foreign relations of the tribes; and, thirdly, we must have some assurances for their good conduct, for which we have always been ready to pay them heavy subsidies.

Here is a valiant, not to say aggressive attitude. And when we come to Mr. Balfour—if indeed Mr. Balfour's speech deserves notice—we find him calmly defending Sir George White's warlike note, with the example of Sir Robert Peel in very different circumstances, throwing discredit on Lord Lawrence's policy, actually comparing ancient invasions from the North-West with the existing military conditions of the present day, and refusing blankly to hold out the slightest hope of avoiding complications in the future any more than in the past. From all this it is perfectly clear that the forward policy, though temporarily scotched, is very far from being dead. The Tory leaders, however abject an attitude may have been assumed by Lord George Hamilton, are unrepentant and incorrigible. Mr. Curzon says plainly that, as Russia has brought her soldiers right up to the waters of the Oxus, we are bound to do the same. Disguise their intentions as some of the leaders may, the clear purpose of them all is to prosecute their disastrous forward policy to the last fraction of an inch permitted by public opinion.

It comes to this, then, that the Liberal leaders are bound not to relax the vigilance of their criticism, and to see to it that the public is thoroughly aroused to the grave danger impending over India—a danger that involves the honour, if not the very stability and permanence, of the British Empire. We regret very much that the speakers in the debate did not put far more stress upon the internal condition of India as affected by these frontier disturbances. Sir William Harcourt laid his finger on the essential point of Lord George Hamilton's declarations of policy when he remarked that general principles were of little value unless they were tested by the application in practical use. If this be done, one can see at once how futile it is to expect any good from the principles laid down, even if they be carried out in perfect honesty and with reasonable discretion. Besides, they are founded on a mass of ignorance and prejudice which is bound to bring them to discredit. We are eternally reminded that we must fulfil our "obligations" to defend Afghanistan from Russian attack. But then our agreement with the Amír leaves it to ourselves to decide in what manner that "obligation" shall be discharged. We are not bound in any way to send an army through the Khyber or the Bolan, and it is exceedingly improbable that we should ever do so. A Russian attack on Afghanistan would mean European war. In any case, provided the tribesmen were thoroughly informed of the purpose of the march of an English army through any of the passes, there is not the remotest doubt that a safe passage would be conceded, just as it was conceded to Chitral. But this end will not be promoted by Tory interference and control in the meantime. Where is the sense of disclaiming interference with the tribesmen when you assert in the same breath that you must have "routes and positions" in their territory? It is of the merest alphabet of the question that they regard a permanent road as a sign of the violation of their independence, and that it is beyond the means of India, in point of men and money, to fortify and hold forts in tribal territory otherwise than by means of tribal levies—the significance of which policy we have had pretty forcibly illustrated in the Khyber and the Malakand. As far as trading is involved, it is obvious that there need be no difficulty. The tribes are as anxious to do business as we are. If kafilas happen to be attacked occasionally, then the offending tribe can readily be reduced to submission and atonement by a judicious blockade; and blockades can be made judicious by a firm hand upon the conduct of frontier political officers. The predatory incursions that Mr. Curzon and Mr. Balfour made so much of are the merest figments of the imagination. Given a firm rule from Calcutta, distinctly and peremptorily discouraging friction, and we know from the experience of Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty that predatory incursions will be few and far between.

We insist, then, on good example, as well as good precept, from the authorities at Calcutta and at Westminster. We welcome the stout assertion of House of Commons control so emphatically made in the debate. But we must point out that the control of the House cannot be exercised in the absence of authoritative information. We remarked last week on the continued reservation of Sir Donald Stewart's memorandum. We now further want to see Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick's memorandum. Again, why has the Waziristan Blue-book been kept back till now, and placed before members just in time not to be of effective use in a debate upon bygones? The whole system is preposterous. More than that, it is open to one to infer from the debate that the matter of that Blue-book was fresh to some at least of the members of the Government under whose ostensible authority the Waziristan expedition was carried out. Is this really possible? We are glad to see that Sir Henry Fowler, who made a lame performance on the Waziristan business, had the courage to attack the predominance of "high military mandarins" on the Viceroy's Council. One remembers how emphatically Sir Charles Napier expressed to Lord John Russell his determination not to go out as Commander-in-Chief if John Company could not

find or make a precedent for giving him a seat in Council. But all that is changed now, and we trust the next Liberal Government will deal drastically with this point. The mischief is much more far-reaching than Sir Henry Fowler stated. Not only are the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Secretary on the Council, but the operation of the decentralisation system has turned the Viceroy practically into a military member. It has diverted his attention from internal administration and concentrated it almost exclusively, certainly in the main, upon foreign—that is, trans-frontier—policy. Sir Auckland Colvin laid this down very plainly in his evidence before Lord Welby's Commission. We hope Sir Henry Fowler's courage will not ooze out at his finger ends before the time for action arrives. One hopeful augury for him is the new honour of disapproval by the *Times*. May he deserve it more and more. He has told us that the forward policy must be resisted "however disguised." It is still masquerading in disguise, though the disguise is very thin.

GAGGING THE NATIVE PRESS OF INDIA.

By E. H. Pickersgill, M.P.,
Of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law.

WHILE the attention of the English people is directed, and rightly directed, to the "forward" policy of the Government beyond the North-Western frontier of India, there is some reason to fear that the proposed changes in the law of sedition, which are being hurried through the Legislative Council of the Viceroy with indecent haste, will not receive the consideration which they deserve. These changes fall under two heads —changes in the substantive law, and changes in the law of procedure; but, as I shall presently show, the effect of the former cannot be adequately appreciated without reference to the latter. Mr. Chalmers, the legal member of the Council, has put forward the plausible argument that the object of his proposals is to bring the law of India respecting the offence of sedition into conformity with the law of England. In order to determine whether this plea is well founded, it may be worth while to set out the terms of the new Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, as amended by the Committee to which the Bill after its introduction was referred. It would seem that it now runs as follows:—

> Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards Her Majesty or the Government as established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years to which fine may be added, or with fine.
>
> Explanation 1. The expression "disaffection" includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity.
>
> Explanation 2. Comments on the measures of the Government with a view to obtain their alteration by lawful means, without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt, or disaffection, do not constitute an offence.
>
> Explanation 3. Comments expressing disapprobation of the administrative or other action of the Government, without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt, or disaffection, do not constitute an offence.

Now I submit that this section does not by any means fairly represent the *actual* law of England. It is idle at this time of day to set forth the language of Lord Kenyon, spoken more than one hundred years ago. If, on the other hand, we consider the language of Mr. Justice Cave in *R. v. Burns and others*, 16 Cox (the Trafalgar Square case), and of Mr. Justice Fitzgerald in *R. v. Sullivan*, 11 Cox, it would seem that in England and even in Ireland at the present day the gist of the offence of sedition is incitement to public disorder, or to resist the lawful authority of the Government by force. It has been said, and it may be true, that in strictness of law the principles laid down in the cases do not cover the whole ground. It may be that the resistance contemplated need not be forcible, and that the disorder likely to ensue need not be immediate. If this be so, then the following would be, I think, a fair exposition of the law of sedition in England. A person will be guilty of the offence of sedition "if he uses either spoken or written words calculated to create in the minds of the persons to whom they are addressed a disposition not to obey the lawful authority of the Government, or to subvert or resist that authority if *and when occasion should arise*, and if he does so with the intention of creating such a disposition in his hearers or readers." The passage which I have quoted is the language of Sir Comer Petheram, the late Chief Justice of Bengal, in the *Bangobasi* case in 1891. It is a judicial interpretation of the existing Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code; and, if I am right in the view which I have here set forth, it shows that no alteration of this section is necessary in order to bring it into conformity with English law.

Thus the plea urged by Mr. Chalmers in support of his proposals falls to the ground. But I am not at all sure that the laws of sedition ought to be identical in India and in England. It has to be repeated, again and again, that India is not England. Elsewhere I have shown that the Indian Penal Code in many respects applies English ideas and principles which are not suited to India. For it is obvious that the conditions of the two countries are totally different. Sir James Stephen, to whom we owe the Section 124A in its present form, did not intend that the law of sedition should be the same in India as in England. Stephen's observations upon the measure which he proposed have, of course, no judicial authority, but it is well to recall them and the circumstances in which they were made in order to show how far we have retrograded in this matter in India in the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. Stephen had to defend his draft section against the indignant attacks of many distinguished Englishmen. Mr. Norton objected to it on the score of its "enormous severity." Mr. Huddleston thought the section was "wholly indefensible." Mr. Cochrane commented on it in these words:—

> I think that as a mere matter of public policy every Government should avoid punishing mere words, unless such be accompanied by acts injurious to the interests of the State. But this clause does not only apply to words, but is, in fact, a direct attack on the public Press.

Stephen, in introducing the measure, "most distinctly asserted that there must be an intention to resist by force, or an attempt to excite resistance by force before the offence could be brought under the section."

Of course, it may be said that the circumstances of India have changed since 1870, that in the interval there has been an enormous development of the Vernacular Press, and that the writings in these newspapers constitute a grave public danger. But these statements do not tally with the testimony of the most authoritative and disinterested observers. Sir Richard Garth, who has been Chief Justice in Bengal, who is a Privy Councillor and a Tory, says of the Indian Native Press:—

> I read native papers myself week after week, and never see anything there at all approaching sedition or even disloyalty or disrespect to English rule. What I do find there and what I rejoice to find is thoroughly well-deserved censure of the arbitrary conduct of many of the Government officials. *I am afraid this is exactly what the Government would wish to repress.*

In fact the proposed charges are actuated by the same motives which inspired the Vernacular Press Act in the bad times of Lord Lytton. Lord Elgin's disclaimer notwithstanding, they do practically differentiate between the English and the Native Press, as I shall show when I deal with the proposed amendment of the law of procedure.

The second proposed change in the substantive law is an amendment of Section 505 of the Penal Code. This section deals with the publication of statements, rumours, and reports, with intent (briefly) to cause public disorder or mischief. As the section now stands, the offence is committed only when the publisher knows that the statement is false. The original draft of the amending Bill not only omitted this ingredient of the offence, but laid upon the person charged the onus of proving the statement to be true. But the Committee to which the Bill was referred has, it seems from the *Times* report, shifted this onus, so that under the amended draft the prosecution will have to prove the statement to be false. Even so this constitutes a very serious change in the law, the necessity for which has not been proved, and which may be used most oppressively against editors and journalists.

But the full import and effect of these alterations of the substantive law, serious as they are, can only be appreciated when we come to consider the proposed changes in the Code of Criminal Procedure. First-class Magistrates are to be empowered to try cases of sedition, which under the present law are under the jurisdiction only of Sessions Judges and Superior Courts. This proposal is simply monstrous. For many years all fair-minded men both in England and in India, and some authorities of the highest

distinction in the latter country, have protested against the union of administrative and judicial functions in the same person. Now the Government propose a peculiarly odious extension of that system. Be the law of sedition what it may in England, after all the main securities for liberty of speech and the liberty of the Press are the force of public opinion and the intervention of the jury. Whereas it is now proposed in India to make the very officer whose policy has been criticised, and perhaps has been (with perfect justice and propriety) severely handled, judge in his own cause. This will in practice affect mainly if not exclusively the Vernacular Press. English editors will be able to be tried by a jury of their own countrymen.

Secondly, it is proposed that editors may be bound over and required to give security for their good behaviour in accordance with Section 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The side-note to the Section is very significant, and will save me from the necessity of further comment. It runs as follows: "Security for good behaviour from vagrants and suspected persons." The Indian proposal suggests an odious precedent. I refer to the oppressive use which was made of the Statute of Edward III during the "coercion" period in Ireland.

The alterations in the draft Bills made by the Committee to which they were referred, do not affect the radical objections to the proposed legislation, but one or two deserve notice. Explanation 3 to Section 124A (quoted above) is certainly an improvement, by allowing "comments expressing disapprobation of *the administrative or other action* of the Government." It would seem somewhat to extend the legitimate area of criticism beyond the very strict limits drawn by Mr. Justice Strachey in Tilak's case.

Secondly, "attempts to promote feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes" have been taken out of the "sedition" section, and are dealt with in a separate section, the maximum punishment for this offence being fixed at two years' imprisonment. If acts of this kind are to be made crimes at all, they ought clearly to be limited (in accordance with the ruling of Mr. Justice Cave in *R. v. Burns*) to attempts made "in such a manner as would be likely to lead to public disorder." But great weight should, I think, be attached to the dissenting minute of Mr. Ananda Charlu, who is of opinion that the section is dangerous and impolitic by reason of its making the Government side, or appear to side, with one party against another, and that, far from healing differences still lingering between different races, it will only widen the gap.

THE DEPORTATION OF THE NATU BROTHERS.

The following correspondence has passed between Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P., and Lord George Hamilton, M.P., Secretary of State for India:—

To the Right Hon. Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, M.P.,
Secretary of State for India in Council,
Whitehall, S.W.

My Lord,

I have been requested to ascertain, if possible, what are the intentions of Government with reference to the Sirdar brothers Natu of Poona, now imprisoned under Bombay Regulation 25 of 1827. As Parliament is not sitting, I am unable to obtain this information by means of a question in the House of Commons. But as these two Sirdars have now been in custody for about four months, and as their families are suffering much distress and anxiety on their account, I have the honour to point out that as yet no charge has been formulated against them, and to request that, if compatible with public interests, I may be informed whether it is proposed to bring them to trial; and if not, upon what grounds their continued detention in prison is considered necessary?

In this connexion I have the honour to bring to your notice the enclosed copy of correspondence between Sirdar B. R. Natu and Mr. Lamb, the District Magistrate of Poona, which appeared in the November number of INDIA. From this correspondence it appears that during the month of March Sirdar Natu, in his capacity of a Municipal Commissioner of Poona, was at the request of his Excellency the Governor, assisting as a volunteer at the plague operations, and that on the 30th of that month he prayed Mr. Lamb to make personal enquiry into certain alleged irregularities in the segregation work, such irregularities involving unnecessary hardship to individuals, disregard for religious and social prejudices, and needless destruction of property. The letter further complains that the advice and protests of the Native gentlemen acting as volunteers were disregarded, and gives the names of certain European officers and Indian gentlemen of position as witnesses to the facts. I shall esteem it a favour if I may be informed whether this correspondence has been correctly reproduced, and whether it is in connexion with these matters that Sirdar Natu is now detained in custody. The correspondence seems to show that Sirdar Natu was only attempting, as a good citizen, to perform a useful and dangerous duty assigned to him by the Government, and that he was doing his best to keep the chief magisterial authority informed regarding the proceedings in the city, and "the great amount of unrest among the general populace," which existed as early as March 30.

I am further desired to bring to your notice that an attachment has been placed by the Bombay Government upon a large amount of valuable personal property belonging to the Natu family. Under Regulation 25 of 1827 an attachment may, under certain circumstances, be placed on land and other immoveable (real) property, but no power is given to seize personal effects. The present attachment therefore appears to be unwarranted by law; and as grave inconvenience is thereby caused to the numerous members and dependents of the family, I am desired to enquire whether you will be so good as to direct the attachment to be removed, and the personal property restored to the custody of those from whose possession it was taken?

I have, etc.

House of Commons, (Signed) W. WEDDERBURN.
November 4, 1897.

India Office,
November 11, 1897.

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th instant on the subject of the detention of Sirdar B. R. Natu and his brother, a copy of which will be forwarded to the Government of Bombay for such observations as they may desire to make upon it.

On the arrival of their reply a further communication will be addressed to you.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Sir W. Wedderburn, Bart., M.P.

To the Right Hon. Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, M.P.,
Secretary of State for India in Council,
Whitehall, S.W.

My Lord,

Referring to my letter of November 4 last, I shall esteem it a favour if you will inform me when I may expect the further communication on the subject of Sirdar B. R. Natu and his brother, promised in paragraph two of your reply of November 11.

I beg to point out that the brothers have now been in custody for about six months, and that two months have elapsed since my letter was addressed to you regarding their detention in prison without trial.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) W. WEDDERBURN.

Meredith, Gloucester,
January 5, 1898.

India Office,
January 11, 1898.

Sir,

I am directed by Lord George Hamilton to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, and to inform you that the observations of the Government of Bombay on your letter of November 4 have not yet been received, but that it is understood that they may shortly be expected.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Sir W. Wedderburn, Bart., M.P.

India Office,
February 8, 1898.

Sir,

In continuation of my letter of November 11, I am

directed by Lord George Hamilton to reply to your letter of November 4 on the subject of the confinement of the Natus.

2. You are no doubt aware that the Regulation under which Sirdar B. R. Natu and his brother are detained, for the reasons of State specified in the preamble, can only be put in force as regards "individuals against whom there may not be sufficient ground to institute any judicial proceedings, or when such proceeding may not be adapted to the nature of the case, or may for other reasons be unadvisable or improper."

The Government of Bombay, therefore, by putting the regulation in force against the brothers Natu, have clearly indicated the view which they take as to the advisability of instituting judicial proceedings against them; and I am to inform you, in reply to your question, that there is no present intention of bringing them to trial.

3. As regards the grounds on which Sirdar B. R. Natu and his brother are detained, I am directed to inform you that they have no relevancy whatever to the correspondence mentioned in your letter. The Government of Bombay are in possession of information which has convinced them that such detention is necessary in order to secure her Majesty's dominions from internal commotion, and that it must, in the opinion of that Government, be continued until they are satisfied that the public tranquillity would not be endangered by the release of the brothers Natu.

4. Finally, you represent that Regulation XXV of 1827 gives no power to attach the personal effects of persons detained under its provisions. On this point the Government of Bombay has taken legal advice and has issued orders for the release of such items in the list of property attached as cannot legally be dealt with under the Regulation.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) Arthur Godley.

Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., M.P.

To the Right Hon. Lord George Hamilton, M.P.,
Secretary of State for India in Council,
Whitehall, S.W.

My Lord,

In acknowledging receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, I must express my profound regret that there is no present intention of bringing the brothers Natu to trial, although they have now been in confinement for more than six months, and, so far as the public are aware, no charge has been formulated nor any evidence adduced against them.

May I remind you that on the 5th of August last you said in the House of Commons: "I believe that the authorities at Bombay are within their rights in the action which they have taken, and that the result of the proceedings will be to unravel the plot which has been formed."

The matter then under discussion was the deplorable assassination of Lieut. Ayerst and Mr. Rand; and as your words referred to that revolting crime, I beg to point out that an individual, Damodar Chapekar Deccani, has confessed to the assassinations, and has been found guilty and sentenced to death. But neither during that trial, nor during other prosecutions, does any evidence appear to have been adduced to show that the assassinations were anything but an isolated act of fanaticism. No widespread plot was suggested in the evidence. Far less was there anything to connect the brothers Natu with such a plot.

Under these circumstances, and looking to the long detention already suffered by these gentlemen, I trust you will see your way to terminate proceedings which are causing much distress to the public mind in India, and which are of quite an exceptional kind, looking to the ordinary course of British justice.

I observe with satisfaction that, after taking legal advice, orders have been issued for the release of such items in the list of property attached as cannot be legally dealt with under the regulation.

I propose to hand this correspondence to the Press.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) W. Wedderburn.

House of Commons,
February 15, 1898.

THE WEEK IN PARLIAMENT.

BY OUR OWN ONLOOKER.

The House of Commons had a distinctly interesting look about four o'clock on Monday, when questions were being finished and everyone was looking forward to the opening of the debate on what is known as the Government's "Forward Policy in India." The definition, by the way, is not quite accurate, for the policy has been pursued outside or beyond the frontier of India. I have said that the House had an interesting look, and those who know the place will understand what I mean. It was full, the members stopped in their places instead of trooping out directly questions were over, and even the least experienced observer would have gathered from a glance that something unusual was going to happen.

And so there was, for on Monday the first really serious debate of the Session was opened. The subject was one of high Imperial concern, and connected with that subject there are possibilities so vast as to make the most flippant feel grave. And there was a strong element of human interest in the occasion, too. The Opposition had decided to entrust its case to Mr. Lawson Walton, a brilliant advocate, who has rapidly come to the front at the Bar. Now it is well known that to be selected for such a duty on such an occasion marks a man out as destined for promotion. I well remember seeing Mr. Asquith put up to move an amendment which defeated a Tory Government, and which made him a Minister. It was therefore felt, now that poor Sir Frank Lockwood has gone, that Mr. Lawson Walton will be a law officer of the Crown in the next Liberal administration. So men crowded in to listen and to decide whether the Liberal leaders had made a wise choice. And the verdict was a favourable one.

I do not propose to follow the details of Mr. Walton's speech. It should be read in the report, and it is well worth reading. It is rather with his looks, his style, and his surroundings that I am interested. Mr. Lawson Walton's appearance is distinctly pleasing, if I may venture to use a word that has fallen a little into disrepute. His style is distinguished by great, almost too much, self-restraint, and his delivery is curiously like Mr. Asquith's without the jerkiness and the unfailing emphasis on every third word which detracts from the excellence of the ex-Home Secretary's speaking. Mr. Walton had the appearance of being tired and to some extent worn out, but I am not sure that the very moderation of his style did not increase the impression he made. He had mastered his case, too. Of course there were men there who knew much more about Indian policy than he does, but I doubt if any of them could have "got the subject up," to use a phrase, so well, or placed it before the House in better style. Of course he did not know, but it just happened that his studious moderation was made to appear all the more admirable by the excited and hysterical harangue which Lord George Hamilton inflicted upon the House.

With regard to that noble lord, I may say in a paraphrase of Macaulay "we do not expect good speeches from him, and it is well that we do not, for he gives us very bad ones." It is only just, however, to acknowledge that he seldom makes so sorry an exhibition of himself as he did on Monday. It was a pitiable spectacle. One of his ejaculations—and the first part of his speech consisted entirely of ejaculations accompanied by wild waving of the arms to his friends in vain appeals for cheers—one of those ejaculations, I repeat, stamps the character of the speech. "I'll dispose of this Chitral affair in a very few minutes!" he said. There you have the man revealed. His noisy *tu quoques* and his absurd declaration that the Liberals had "libelled Lord Elgin all over the world every morning as guilty of a breach of faith," were merely boring, and are not of sufficient importance to be commented on.

I am by no means one of those who think that in a big debate only the front bench men are worthy of notice, but Sir Henry Fowler's speech, which followed this strange harangue, was of real significance. For he protested gravely against the continual pressure brought to bear on the Indian Government by the restless military faddists out there. Sir Henry declared that it was almost impossible for an Indian Secretary and a Viceroy to withstand that pressure. It struck me that there was a touch of repentance, of conviction of sin, in that statement, for he has not always left undone the things he ought not to have done in Indian policy. And he should remember that Lord Ripon, when Viceroy, successfully withstood the malign influence referred to, from first to last.

There are those who continually complain that the House of Commons is like the lazy Scheldt—melancholy and slow. It is so, sometimes, but not always, and it had a treat on Tuesday. Mr. Asquith was at his very best, and Mr. Asquith's best is very good indeed. In fact, his presentation of the case against the Government was superb, his mastery of its intricacies, his arrangement of points and arguments, his choice of language and his style of delivery all contributed to a positive triumph. Seldom has any man received such a "roasting" as that which Lord George Hamilton had to endure when his ludicrous ignorance or *finesse* about the makers of the road to

Chitral, or as to how many roads there are, was being exposed. One point was positively sublime. Mr. Asquith taunted the noble lord with having boasted three times that his party had made the road. "Only twice!" pleaded poor Lord George, in a feeble parody of the immortal excuse, "It was only a little one."

Mr. Curzon came next, and I think did better so far as style and taste are concerned than he has done before. But as to his matter—well, some notion of it may be gathered from the fact that his chief point was that we are bound by moral obligations to remain in Chitral. To break your word, and then to say that your breach of faith is the result of moral obligation, is a fine example of what Mr. Lawson Walton has termed "the higher or official morality." The debate was wound up in accordance with precedent by Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Balfour. Sir William rubbed in two points chiefly. One had been mentioned by Sir Henry Fowler and Mr. Asquith—the astuteness of the Government in suppressing the memorandum of Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick on the occupation of Chitral (because it is hostile to the Government), while publishing the same gentleman's observations on Waziristan (because they reflect upon Sir Henry Fowler). Sir William's other chief point was a vehement protest against Sir George White's speech-making and propounding of policies. A "Commander-in-Chief on the stump" was his scornful phrase, and Mr. Balfour certainly did not score in trying to meet this by saying that Sir William's party had appointed Sir George White. It struck me that this only showed that Sir William could rise above party when necessary. The Government, of course, won the division. The numbers were 311 to 208, and the majority of 103 was about 40 below the normal.

I have said that this debate was the first real debate of the Session. There was a two-hours' farce on Friday, when a sort of a discussion on Home Rule for Ireland was introduced by Mr. John Redmond, who moved an amendment in favour of an "Independent Parliament" in Dublin. It is said that Mr. Redmond's motive was to embarrass Mr. Dillon and also the Liberals. I never attribute motives, but it is certain that the result was an opportunity for Mr. Balfour to make fun of his opponents, an opportunity of which he did not fail to make use to the full. It was great fun, no doubt, but of no real importance.

Imperial Parliament.

Friday, February 11.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE AFRIDIS AND THE SALT DUTY.

Mr. Samuel Smith asked the Secretary of State for India, whether the salt duty charged at Kohat, on the North-West frontier, was raised from four to eight annas per maund in 1883, causing discontent among the Afridis, and whether it was raised further to 32 annas in 1896.

Whether he was aware that the enhanced duty was 32 times the cost of the article:

And, whether any steps were being taken to make a satisfactory settlement of the question.

Lord G. Hamilton: It is true that the Kohat Salt Duty has been raised first in 1883, to eight annas, and recently to 32 annas, per Kohat maund, which is equivalent to 26 annas per Indian maund, for the reasons given in the correspondence presented on Tuesday last. (Vol. i., p. 147-175.)

2. The present duty is not 32 times, but about 6½ times the cost price of the salt.

3. The correspondence to which I have already referred shows that I propose to await a report on the new system which I shall expect to receive when trade is resumed.

THE FINANCIAL POSITION.

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for India, whether, in the Indian Budget for 1897-8, the amount to be remitted to England in the year was estimated at £13,000,000; whether the Council drafts sold up to date had only realised a little over £6,000,000; and how it was proposed to make good the deficiency.

Lord G. Hamilton: It is the case that in the Indian Budget for 1897-8 the amount to be received from the sale of Council drafts was estimated at £13,000,000, and that up to the present date only about £6,460,000 has been received from this source. Moreover, a sum of £669,000 was expended in the purchase of drafts payable in India; so that the total deficiency under this head is something over £7,000,000.

On the other hand, Indian Sterling Bills have been issued to the extent of four millions in excess of the amount estimated in the Budget; and, as regards the balance, it remains to be seen whether it cannot be made good by the sale of Council drafts before the end of March.

Mr. Maclean: These £4,000,000 are, I suppose, an addition to the indebtedness?

Lord G. Hamilton: The £4,000,000 will be issued here, and they are in addition to the existing debt.

THE WAR BEYOND THE FRONTIER.
NUMBERS OF KILLED AND WOUNDED.

Mr. M'Laren asked the Secretary of State for India, how many officers and men of the British forces had been killed and how many wounded in the operations on the frontier:

And, how many officers and men had died of their wounds and of disease since the operations commenced.

Lord G. Hamilton: The following are the latest figures in my possession:—Killed: 3 British officers of British and Native regiments, 146 British soldiers, 310 Native officers and soldiers. Wounded: 91 British officers of British and Native regiments, 419 British soldiers, 900 Native officers and soldiers. But I have not received complete returns of the casualties among the Native troops, nor of deaths from disease. A telegram on the subject has been sent to the Government of India.

THE NEW LAW OF SEDITION.

Mr. Pickersgill asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he would place in the Library of the House, for the information of honourable members, copies of the Penal Code Bill, and the Criminal Procedure Code Bill, recently introduced into the Legislative Council of the Viceroy of India.

Lord G. Hamilton: These two Bills, as introduced in the Governor-General's Legislative Council, will be found in the Proceedings of the Council for the 21st December and in the *Gazette of India* for the 21st December which were placed in the Library of the House on the 17th January according to the usual practice.

PETITIONS PRESENTED.

East India (Contagious Diseases).—Petitions against State regulation. From Northampton, and Barking (two). To lie upon the Table.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

East India (Trade).—Copy presented—of Tables relating to the Trade of British India with British Possessions and Foreign Countries for the five years 1892-3 to 1896-7 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

Monday, February 14.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE WAR BEYOND THE FRONTIER.

Sir James Fergusson asked the Under-Secretary of State for War, if he would grant a Return of the marching out (field) strength of each battalion of British infantry detailed for service in the recent operations on the North-West frontier of India, specifying the reasons for the retention of the remainder in quarters.

Mr. Brodrick: There is no objection to give this return if moved for; but the portion requiring the reason for retaining men in quarters can only be obtained by reference to India.

Captain Pirie asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he could state the number of officers employed on the staff in the frontier campaigns of 1897-8, and the number of officers so employed who had passed through the Staff College.

Lord G. Hamilton: I am not able to give complete information on the subject to which the hon. member's question refers; but I will make enquiry, and, when I have heard from India, will communicate with him.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN EXPENDITURE.

Mr. Channing asked the Secretary of State for India, when the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure would present its Report.

Lord G. Hamilton: I am informed by the Chairman that the preparation of the Report is now under consideration, but it is not at present possible to say how soon it will be ready for submission to Her Majesty.

PETITIONS PRESENTED.

East India (Contagious Diseases).—Petitions against State regulation. From Leeds (two), Birkdale, Stirling, Dunfermline, Birmingham (three), and Saffron Walden. To lie upon the Table.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.
THE WAR BEYOND THE INDIAN FRONTIER.
MR. LAWSON WALTON'S AMENDMENT.
IMPORTANT DEBATE.

Mr. Lawson Walton, moved the following amendment:—"And we humbly express to your Majesty our disapproval of the policy pursued in the permanent military occupation of Chitral and the maintenance and fortification of the road from Peshawar through the territory of the independent tribes, and deplore the consequences which have followed from that policy; and we further humbly represent to your Majesty that the safety and prosperity of your Majesty's Indian Empire will be best promoted by respecting the independence of the frontier tribes and avoiding the occupation of their territory." He said it was unnecessary for him to emphasise the importance of this subject. (Hear, hear.) A war engaging more men than had ever taken the field during any previous period of our history in that region had for some time been conducted upon the north-west border of our Indian Empire, and while the courage of their troops had been equal to the best traditions of the English army—(cheers)—there had been untoward and inexplicable incidents which had occasioned a feeling of some anxiety. (Opposition cheers.) The cost of these operations raised for consideration an important moral question. (Hear, hear.) They would have to discuss whether it was just that the burden entailed by these engagements should be cast upon the already embarrassed exchequer of India or be borne by the people of this country. (Opposition cheers.) We had suffered in the course of this campaign serious sacrifices, but these would be gladly borne by the people of this country and of India provided they were satisfied that the war was just and had been undertaken or pursued on some high aim of policy. (Hear, hear.) But before this chapter of our history was finally closed the nation would

demand, and rightly demand, that one or other ground of justification should be conclusively established. (Opposition cheers.) Chitral had been occupied in order to forestall Russian intrigue, and in order to avert the intrigues of the Amir of Afghanistan. When the expedition took place it met with considerable hostility. It had been predicted that the moment the British regiments appeared beyond the frontier there would be a religious war extending over the whole of the frontier. The present Government issued a proclamation to the tribes, and it would be most difficult to defend, on any platform, the terms of that proclamation announcing that there would be no permanent occupation of the country, and the erection of two forts, four cantonments, and the quartering of five regiments. The Liberal Government had come to the conclusion that a pacific maintenance of the Chitral road was an impossibility—(cheers)—they had come to the conclusion that it was not their duty to introduce a new policy, but to adhere to the policy which the Indian Government had for some years adopted with regard to Chitral, which was the withdrawal of the British resident and forces from that district. He submitted that the Liberal Government came to a wise and statesmanlike conclusion at that time, and the result had been emphasised by Sir L. Griffin, who held that the Chitral post was useless. (Opposition cheers.) The Liberal Government were supported in their conclusion by well-known military opinion; but when the present Government came into office they proceeded to reverse the policy of their predecessors, and they did that without any facts having been brought before them which had not been before their predecessors, the Liberal Government. Such a breach of continuity of policy involved grave responsibility. (Opposition cheers.) The argument as to English prestige being involved in the policy of the present Government with regard to Chitral was unsuccessfully urged with regard to the evacuation of Kandahar. As to the dread of Russia, recent history had shown that Russian designs need no longer trouble the peace of India. Russian advance was seeking an outlet now at a point farther East, and was neglecting the plains of India for the shores of the Pacific. (Opposition cheers.) He submitted that the effect of the policy of the present Government was to violate the essential principle of Lord Lawrence's policy, which was to respect the freedom of the frontier tribes. He would remind the House of what the Duke of Devonshire said in March, 1881. He said, "You may gain your strategic positions, but only by crushing out the spirit of independence of the people who have properly used and turned to account the best defences you could desire against invasion by an enemy." (Opposition cheers.) One wondered whether that speech had been considered by the present Cabinet, and whether those who held such opinions had been out-voted in the Government (Opposition cheers.) The Colonial Secretary had told them that while the Liberal Government had the support of some military critics, yet the vast majority were in favour of the policy of the Conservative Government. One wondered whether the component votes of the majority were weighed as well as counted. (Opposition cheers.) It would be difficult to outweigh such a body of expert opinion as that which influenced the right hon. gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. The storm broke in July, 1897, when the very levies which had been subsidised either took to flight or joined the enemy. He submitted that the policy of the Government and this outbreak were cause and effect. It was said that the war was due to an outbreak of fanaticism; but there was patriotism as well, and it was evident that they should be careful how they provoked such formidable and combined forces. (Opposition cheers.) It was idle to represent it as a mere fanatical outbreak, when it was evidently the outbreak of what was called the forward movement. (Hear, hear.) He asked the House to say that this act of administration was to be disapproved because it was the revival of the principle of the policy of a scientific frontier, and because it was a reversal of the administrative action of the last Government without justification. (Cheers.) He submitted that this policy weakened the defences of India by converting these tribes who were the natural garrison of our frontier into hostile and active foes, who would become the allies of our enemies in time of trouble. (Opposition cheers.) This policy had already resulted in a disastrous war, which was unhappily not yet over, and which had resulted in a large loss of life. Some of our finest troops and bravest officers had laid down their lives in the cause of this brutal campaign. (Opposition cheers.) He knew he would be met by the strong ties of party allegiance in opposition to the first part of his amendment, but if he had not the votes of gentlemen opposite, he thought he would have their sympathy for the second part of his resolution. And he hoped it would be made clear that in their future policy they would be guided by the same respect for the independence of our neighbours as we entertained for our own, and that any departure from this wise and magnanimous rule would be received with the emphatic condemnation of Parliament. (Opposition cheers.)

Lord George Hamilton.

Lord G. Hamilton, who spoke in tones of excitement, said the House had listened with interest to the ingenious speech from the hon. and learned gentleman, and while he congratulated him on his excellent speech, he must sympathise with him on the badness of his brief. (Opposition cries of "Oh" and Ministerial cheers.) As soon as the frontier troubles assumed a serious aspect, right hon. gentlemen opposite went all over the country distorting and exaggerating, and mis-stating the facts of the case. (Opposition cries of "Oh.") They had spent the autumn in condemning the forward policy on the frontier. On the day that Parliament met he published two Blue-books, which contained the authentic facts which blew to pieces the romances of the recess. (Opposition laughter.) Of course, right hon. and hon. gentlemen opposite objected to the publication of these Blue-books. (Opposition cries, "We wanted them sooner.") He published them as soon as he could, and it was beyond the wit of man to imagine how right hon. gentlemen who knew these facts could have made the statements they did on a public platform. It was perfectly true that there were differences between the Government and the Front Bench opposite as to the settlement of the question of Chitral; but they were very small, and on this slender ledge right hon. gentlemen had tried to build up a gigantic structure of innuendo and mis-statement. He would dispose of this Chitral case in a very few minutes. (Opposition laughter.) The late Government went to Chitral, and in consequence of going there their agent got entangled, and an expedition had to be sent to rescue him. The late Government vetoed the only workable and practicable proposals put before them by the Indian Government, and they left office without suggesting any alternative plan. He would admit at once that it was inadvisable to lock British troops up in Chitral; but there was another risk to which the late Government gave no consideration. The Indian Government pointed out that if the tribes who had helped the expedition to Chitral were deserted, British prestige would greatly suffer. There might be a risk in locking up a few troops there, and in an unprotected road, but that risk was infinitesimal compared with the desertion of our native friends and allies, for that would strike at the very foundation of the stability of our rule in the Empire. (Ministerial cheers.) The whole reports of the Blue-books showed that the tribesmen in the neighbourhood of Chitral bitterly regretted that they were carried away on the impulse of the moment, and they all said that they had no complaint to make of the Government. "They saw all the world going Ghazi, and so they went Ghazi." Even when fanaticism was at its height, the result of our having stood by the tribes who helped us in the expedition to Chitral, was that out of the 180 miles of route, along only ten miles of it was there any fighting. But supposing that the Government had adopted the policy of the abandonment, what would have been our position when the outbreak occurred? It was admitted by everybody that Chitral could not stand alone, and that if anarchy and disorder broke out, our friends would be the first to suffer. The other day the Leader of the Opposition called attention to the fact that there was a discrepancy between the statements he (Lord G. Hamilton) had made, that in one speech he said the present Government made the road to Chitral, and in another, that it was made by right hon. gentlemen opposite. That was correct, and it was the unfortunate result of placing reliance upon the telegrams the late Government sent. (Ministerial cheers and laughter.) The telegram sent declared that the late Government had decided that Chitral should not be fortified, and that no road should be made, while as a matter of fact the road was already in existence. (Ministerial cheers.) The one object apparently of right hon. gentlemen opposite the moment this trouble broke out on the North-West frontier was not to help but to do everything to embarrass the Indian Government by gross mis-statements. (Ministerial cheers.) He did not say that if he had had a free hand he would ever have gone to Chitral; but right hon. gentlemen opposite went, and nothing was easier to sanction the advance and then to condone it by saying it was only a temporary measure. But the most discreditable part of the performance of the right hon. gentlemen were the allegations which they brought against Lord Elgin of breach of faith. (Ministerial cheers.) This proclamation was in their hands for months. They allowed Lord Elgin to enter into negotiations with the tribes for the construction and maintenance of the road, and yet when the present Government came into office, because they consummated those negotiations, the party opposite accused Lord Elgin of a flagrant, deliberate and wilful violation of a solemn undertaking. (Cheers.) He did not wish to bring Lord Elgin's name unduly into the debate—(Opposition cries, "Oh, oh")—did hon. gentlemen who interrupted think after the Viceroy had been branded all over the world as a man who had deliberately broken his solemn undertaking, that he as Secretary of State was not to defend him in the House of Commons? (Ministerial cheers.) It was only fair to say that with the single exception of the telegram from Sir H. Fowler he never had one word, private or public, in connexion with the proclamation. (Ministerial cheers.) It was a monstrous abuse of platform license to so attack Lord Elgin. (Ministerial cheers.) He had quoted the language of the late Home Secretary (Mr. Asquith) that the Indian Government had deliberately and flagrantly violated a solemn undertaking. (Opposition cries of "No, no.")

Mr. Asquith: I did not use those words. I said in my opinion and in the opinion of the tribes, the Government in this matter had been guilty of a gross breach of faith. I have explained this matter before, and the noble lord has no excuse whatever. (Opposition cheers.)

Lord G. Hamilton said the right hon. gentleman in his explanation repeated one of his monstrous mis-statements, because he said, "in the opinion of the tribes." That was absolutely untrue. No tribesman had ever ventured to attribute bad faith to his colleagues. To turn to the other part of the resolution. On Friday last the Liberal party were asked to support their leader in that House because he felt unable to give a definition of the word "independence," and it was too much now to ask the House to vote for this amendment, because that word could be so clearly defined that it was to become the one factor of their frontier policy. (Ministerial laughter.)

Sir W. Harcourt: Do you deny independence?

Lord G. Hamilton said he did, because it was capable of indefinite extension. (Ministerial cheers.) It was perfectly true that the word occurred more than once in his dispatches; but it was always explained by words with which it was associated. He went far beyond it, in wishing to respect the tribal system of Government and the tribal institutions, which were not to be interfered with except from some cause which was essential for the fulfilment of the obligations of the Government. These tribes on their frontiers were by heredity robbers and associated with that avocation that of attempted murder and outrage. (Opposition groans and Ministerial cheers.)

Sir W. Harcourt: That is conciliatory language. (Opposition cheers.)

Lord George Hamilton said he did not catch the interruption of the right hon. gentleman; but his contention was borne out by Sir H. Lawrence, Lord Lawrence and Sir R. Montgomery. These tribes committed the outrages because they trusted in the impenetrability of their fastnesses, and there were only two known systems by which the outrages could be prevented, one was the Sind system, the other was the Punjab system. Both were an interference with the

independence of the tribes, and consequently if the House of Commons agreed to the proposition of this kind, they would prevent the only known methods of stopping outrage and securing peace upon our frontiers. (Ministerial cheers.) This country had embarked in a forward policy by the engagements into which they had entered with the Amír of Afghanistan and by other quasi-international documents with Russia, and those arrangements constituted the Alpha and Omega of their forward policy, and every single solitary one of those engagements were entered into by the Opposition when in power. (Cheers.) Yet they were now told by the Leaders of the Opposition that their one object was to respect the independence of the tribes. (Ministerial cheers.) When they were in office they used different language. (Ministerial laughter.) He did not blame the late Government for what they did, but he protested against any body of men who during their tenure of office were responsible for the development of the forward policy in India repudiating that policy. (Ministerial cheers.) He believed in the system of party government because it was the most elastic machinery by which expression could be given to the views prevailing at a particular time, and as being the best way of representing a consistent and strong policy abroad; and in no country was it more necessary to observe that policy than it was in connexion with India. He thought he had clearly shown whether the forward policy was right or wrong; at any rate, right hon. gentlemen opposite were as much responsible as the present Government. Now he turned to what was very much more important—the policy of the future. The enormous variety of the duties imposed on the Indian Government rendered it almost impossible to lay down any rigid rule as regards procedure, but there were certain rules of policy on which they could agree. He believed himself that no fresh administrative responsibility should be undertaken unless it was essential for the performance of obligations already entered into. He had great respect for the opinion of military men, but at the same time he thought there was too much tendency nowadays to look upon war as a game of chess. (Ironical Opposition cheers.) He admitted there was no good in occupying advanced military posts unless they could make practical use of them. (Opposition cheers.) They had not merely to deal with a narrow fringe of territory within the Durand agreement, but there was an almost inexhaustible supply of fanaticism, and it was almost impossible for a political officer in this tract of country so to shape his course as to avoid giving offence. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, he thought that for the future they should keep the Sind and Punjab systems to their respective and legitimate spheres of influence. There were certain additional difficulties to face, and there were certain advantages. They must have, as population developed, more contact with the tribes. They had a larger area to deal with, and undoubtedly there was greater solidarity among the tribes than was suspected. (Hear, hear.) The Government must enforce their power over the great trade routes leading to Afghanistan, even though they passed through the country of the tribes. They had passed through that country, and had asserted their strength, but had given convincing proofs that they were most reluctant to interefere with the people or their affairs. The question of frontier policy had been an everlasting source of partisan strife since he entered the House, and he wanted, if possible, to put an end to that state of things. He wanted clearly to lay down for the future what could be done and what could not be done. They had to face the situation in India, to grapple with it, and to overcome it, and if those who followed him in that debate would only devote their attention to the future instead of to the past, it would be a more profitable course. He did not think it necessary to perpetuate indulgence in past wrangles and past disputes; but as he had said, if those who spoke hereafter would only devote their attention to the policy to be pursued in the future they might hope that the upshot of this debate would be that, no matter which party might be in power, the same policy, the same principles, and the same methods would be applied with firmness towards the treatment of the various difficulties which would from time to time necessarily arise. (Ministerial cheers.)

Sir H. Fowler.

Sir H. Fowler, who on rising was received with Opposition cheers, said if the whole of the speech of the noble lord had been couched in the terms of the last quarter of an hour that debate might have been very appreciably shortened, and perhaps the general effect of the policy of the Government to a considerable extent strengthened. (Opposition cheers.) But the noble lord must not ask them to forget the first three-quarters of an hour of his speech, in which he made a series of statements which the Opposition were bound to controvert, and which they fully believed to be inconsistent alike with the recorded and known facts of the case, and inconsistent with the very policy which the noble lord had advocated in the concluding portion of his speech. (Opposition cheers.) He should congratulate his hon. friend behind him (Mr. Lawson Walton) on the admirable speech in which he opened the debate, and which he did not think was entitled to be subjected to the criticism which the noble lord had launched against it in the first sentence of his speech. (Hear, hear.) He had great dislike to personal questions on the floor of that House, but it was impossible for him to ignore the accusation which had been brought against him that he had not communicated with Lord Elgin with reference to the views of the late Government, nor could he accept the interpretation which the noble lord gave of the style and form of the communications which passed between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. The noble lord was quite right in saying that ordinary official communications were entitled to be seen by every member of the Council. He was also right in saying that official secret dispatches and secret telegrams, which were reminiscent of the old Court of Directors, might pass exclusively between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, and the members of Council were not entitled to see them, although he believed there were many precedents for their being quoted in Blue-books. But so far as the third class of communications and private telegrams was concerned, they were always supposed to be exclusively private until the First Lord of the Treasury broke down the practice that had been in force since the Government of India assumed its present position. The noble lord had charged him again and again that he had made no communication to the Viceroy with reference to the views entertained by the Government with regard to the policy held by the Indian Government. That he was bound to deny. (Opposition cheers.) The Viceroy particularly asked him in a telegram that no decision should be come to until that dispatch arrived, and he was bound to respect that wish of the Viceroy. (Hear, hear.) But within twenty-four hours of the arrival of that dispatch he telegraphed to the Viceroy—he thought courteously—he did not charge him with a breach of faith, but he intimated as clearly as possible where the uneasiness was felt, and stated that a strong feeling existed here—not among the officials of the India Office, because they knew nothing about it, nor among the public press, nor in the House of Commons, because it was not discussed in the House. It meant the Cabinet and nothing else—(Opposition cheers)—and it was perfectly understood what he meant. If the noble lord said the Viceroy did not understand it——

Lord G. Hamilton: Not only did he not understand it, but he wrote to me personally in the sense of the telegram, and that he never knew of these objections on the part of the Government.

Sir H. Fowler said the noble lord having said that, he had not another word to say. He might have said a strong feeling existed in the Cabinet, but he concluded by using the word "here," the meaning being perfectly clear. Within twenty-four hours of his telegram the Viceroy replied that he anticipated the charge and was prepared to meet it. He submitted his telegram to Lord Elgin and the Viceroy's reply to his colleagues before they came to a decision on the matter. The despatch arrived on May 31, and immediately after the late Government had come to a decision they were defeated. The noble lord said that he could dispose of the Chitral case in a few minutes, but he did not think that he had done so. The noble lord said that the late Liberal Government went to Chitral. He did not think that they did. (Opposition cheers.) He knew that they went to Chitral with an army, but they went there in order to rescue subjects of the Queen, including the British minister, Sir George Robertson, who were doing their duty to their Sovereign. (Cheers.) So lately as when Lord Cross was Secretary for India they had no idea of forming a resident agency in Chitral. From the very first the late Government had no idea of forming a Chitral road which would be of a permanent character. The noble lord had talked of their allies in the valley. Who were they? There were two sets of tribes with whom they had to deal. There was one set of tribes who did not fight against them because they relied on the proclamation. (Opposition cheers.)

Lord G. Hamilton: I never heard of that before.

Sir H. Fowler replied that it was stated in the dispatches. There were, however, on the other hand, several thousands of men in arms against them. He should like to ask the noble lord whether they could take 15,000 men through an unknown, almost desert, country, crossing three rivers and two mountain passes, without constructing a road. (Opposition cheers.) Of course they had to construct a road, or the troops could never have reached Chitral. That involved the construction of a permanent road. He failed to understand the attitude of the noble lord in now repudiating on behalf of the present Government the making of that road, and alleging that it was the patriots on the Front Opposition Bench who were responsible for making it. (Opposition laughter and cheers.) The noble lord in the course of his speech said that he (Sir H. Fowler) was responsible for adopting a forward policy in Chitral, and he alluded to the Durand agreement in connexion with the policy which was adopted in that district. A good deal had been said about the Durand agreement, and the noble lord had at last been compelled to state that that agreement was necessary. He (Sir H. Fowler) desired to point out that in speeches made during the Recess, the Durand agreement was described as an achievement of the Opposition, and it was said that the responsibility for it rested with them. That was not a complete statement of the case, and when it was stated that Liberal Governments were responsible for all the entanglements which had taken place, they appeared to forget that great entanglement and folly—he meant the folly and worse than folly of the Afghan War. (Opposition cheers.) He (Sir H. Fowler) was proud that he was one of those who voted in favour of the evacuation of Kandahar, and the adoption of a policy which had secured for fifteen years a friendly and independent Afghan, and a peace which had not been disturbed until the unfortunate affair in Chitral. (Opposition cheers.) There was no analogy between the Tochi Valley case and that of Chitral. The policy of Chitral was an entirely new departure and was based upon military grounds and no others. With regard to the recent operations, he did not call the policy a forward one, but a military policy from first to last. Forward was a misleading word. (Opposition cheers.) He did not think that the Secretary for War spoke of the military party, a distinguished representative of whom recently propounded his views in the *Nineteenth Century*. The writer, a leading expert, proposed complete disarmament of the whole of the regions which bordered our frontier from north to south; the construction of metal roads; in case of recalcitrant tribes, forced migration from the hills to the plains—(laughter)—and the whole of the districts to be placed under military control and martial law. In dealing with the cost of those operations the writer suggested that the tribes might be compelled to furnish free labour. (Laughter.) If that suggestion was adopted slavery would be the crowning edifice. (Laughter.)

Mr. Curzon: I do not think that the writer of that article—Major Younghusband—who is a great friend of mine, is the gentleman whom the right hon. gentleman has in his mind.

Sir H. Fowler: Yes.

Mr. Curzon: No, it is his brother, who does not know anything about Chitral.

Sir H. Fowler: Of course the right hon. gentleman's knowledge is greater than mine, as he bases it on personal friendship, but I remember reading a very interesting book entitled "The Relief of Chitral," in which the names of both brothers appear on the title

page. I suppose he knows something about it. A knowledge of the subject is usually a condition precedent of writing a book.

Mr. CURZON: Oh, no. (Loud laughter and cries of "Hear, hear.")

Sir H. FOWLER was convinced that the House of Commons would never sanction a policy like that suggested by the writer of the article in question, nor such as that suggested in the recent regrettable speech of Sir George White, who at present commanded the Army in India. In conclusion the right hon. gentleman said India had three lines of defence. The first line of defence was the fortifications which nature had reared on the North-West frontier. Her second line was the great Indian Army, composed not only of Scotchmen, Englishmen and Irishmen, but of Gurkhas, Sikhs, Afridis, and all the various tribes that served the Queen in India, and especially the Imperial service troops. The third line of defence was the wise, just, and impartial government of India, securing its peace and guarding its freedom, husbanding its revenues, and developing its resources. He was afraid that if that last line of defence was ever sapped, ever undermined, ever abandoned, our real hold on India would be gone for ever. It was because he was afraid of that last line of defence being endangered that he objected to any action which might be taken with the idea of satisfying the claims of an aggressive militarism which he believed to be the greatest danger that now menaced the North-West frontier of India. (Loud Opposition cheers.)

Mr. MACLEAN said that the gentlemen who were responsible for the amendment would have had a great deal more sympathy if they had confined that amendment to general principles, and had abstained from trying to make party capital out of what happened in Chitral a short time ago. He did not think that the right hon. gentleman, the Member for Wolverhampton, had come very well out of this controversy, and he was inclined to pity the Opposition for the miserable plight in which they found themselves in consequence of having raised the question. He approved of the attitude of the present Government, but expressed the opinion that our relations with Afghanistan were exceedingly unsatisfactory, and suggested that the time had come when the Government should try to make some arrangement with Russia which would be of benefit to England, India, and Russia. The hon. member, who was called to order for not keeping to the question, concluded by expressing the opinion that it would be an act of magnanimity worthy of a great nation if we were to go to the assistance of our brethren in India, and to give them relief in their time of necessity.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought too much had been said about the past of Chitral and too little as to its future. He hoped the last had been heard of the charge of breach of faith, for he had never considered that it could be substantiated. Viewing the past history of the transactions, it was impossible for one party to make out a better case than the other. (Ministerial cheers.) If an error of policy had been committed, leading up to these frontier troubles, they could not fairly put the blame exclusively on the Indian Government.

Sir J. DICKSON-POYNDER defended the Government against the baseless charges raised. If the amendment were passed, it would be a terrible blow to the brave soldiers who had been fighting in our interests for months past. (Hear, hear.)

SIR C. DILKE.

Sir C. DILKE said that he agreed with the Secretary of State for India as to the necessity of some such agreement as that known as the Durand agreement. The promises which were volunteered by Mr. Gladstone's Government to the Amir of Afghanistan were fortified in 1885, when the Amir went to India, and in the presence of Lord Dufferin stated that the British Government had declared it would assist him in repelling any foreign enemy. Those engagements, entered into with the full knowledge of the necessities of this country, justified the Durand agreement. He objected, however, to that portion of the Durand agreement which related to the handing over of the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush to the Amir of Afghanistan. The real question they had to decide was what was to be their policy in the future? He did not want to fall into the same error as some hon. gentlemen had fallen into, that of making suggestions couched in somewhat vague language. The forward policy had to be considered on its merits, and undoubtedly that policy had in some cases been a success, and in other cases a failure. He thought that the best scheme—so long as a good man could be got to carry it out—was to make friends with the tribes, and enter into a friendly understanding with them. That was preferable to the Punjab system, which led to expeditions against tribes. The present trouble was largely due to the Punjab or sealed frontier system. He much regretted that the present amendment had not been directed against the war and its general arrangements. They might then have discussed the subject in which the whole of the constituencies were interested. It was of course impossible to leave the country seeing that we had carried the sword there, and that we had cut down fruit trees and burnt villages. Hon. members must not forget that the Khyber Pass must be kept open. He implored the Government not to make up their minds that the Sandeman system was inapplicable to the northern frontier of India, but rather to try and make it applicable by finding the right men to carry it into effect. (Hear, hear.)

Sir E. ASHMEAD BARTLETT said that the speech of the right hon. baronet was of rather a boomerang character, and would scarcely be welcomed by the leaders of the Opposition. He was inclined to think that Russian agents were not unconcerned in the recent frontier disturbances in India. Some hon. members opposite seemed to think that was a matter for derision, but he asked them whether Russia had ever hesitated to break any treaty when it suited it to do so. The mover of the amendment had quoted a speech of the Duke of Devonshire, but that was made when he was Lord Hartington, and under the influence of the Leader of the Opposition. (Laughter.) He was sure that the duke would not depreciate the importance of maintaining the prestige of the British Empire. (Hear, hear.)

Sir WILFRID LAWSON said that as far as he could understand, the two front benches, after firing shots at each other, had come to the conclusion that the whole thing arose from Lord Cross. (Loud laughter.) But his point was that, whoever was responsible in the first instance, it was now a very serious and alarming matter. Nobody questioned the valour of our troops; they had got with the greatest heroism into impregnable places, and had got out again with a great deal of skill, but the loss of life and the destruction of property had been deplorable. Unless there was an absolute necessity for this campaign, it was a hideous and horrible international crime. The hon. member for Fife had said that the House was becoming an Army and Navy Stores. (Laughter.) That was the policy of the Great Englander represented in Mr. Chamberlain. The Great Englander's policy was profit by plunder; and the Little Englander's policy profit by peace. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Where did you get that from?

Sir W. LAWSON: From yourself. (Laughter.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Are you quoting?

Sir W. LAWSON: Oh dear, no. I never quote; I only give your spirit. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I beg the hon. member's pardon. I have not the least objection to him accusing me of what I have said; but if he considers that represents anything I have said he is mistaken.

Sir W. LAWSON withdrew the statement. There were signs of a change in this policy, and many a man must have read with gratitude Lord Salisbury's assurance that he was not going to fight with all the world. Mr. Curzon was another recruit to the rapidly-growing Little-Englander party. If the Government wished to show the change to be genuine, it must drop all this abominable fighting on the frontier.

Mr. E. W. BECKETT was convinced that until a better system was instituted on the frontier of India we should never know what it was to have peace. As for Chitral, he should not have been surprised to learn that the Government had tossed up whether they should take it or not. (Laughter.) He thought they might well adopt in India the plan of Sir Robert Sandeman, which was one of peace and goodwill and which Sir Robert carried out with much success.

Mr. W. REDMOND supported the amendment and condemned the expenditure which had been made of blood and money in endeavouring to suppress the frontier tribes in India.

The hon. member was speaking at midnight, when the debate stood adjourned.

Tuesday, February 15.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

East India (Famine).—Copy presented—of Further Papers relating to the Famine and Relief Operations in India in 1896-7 (Vol. V., Resolution on the Administration of Famine Relief in the North-West Provinces and Oudh during 1896 and 1897) [by Command]. To lie upon the Table.

East India (Warlike Operations) (Killed and Wounded).—Return presented—relative thereto (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 154, of Session 1896) [Address February 15, 1897; Mr. Lough]. To lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS PRESENTED.

East India (Contagious Diseases).—Petitions against State regulation. From Plymouth, Sydenham, Leeds, Bristol (two), Plumstead, Hornsey, and Market Harborough. To lie upon the Table.

THE WAR BEYOND THE FRONTIER.
THE TRIBESMEN'S ARMS.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT asked the Secretary of State for India, if he was in possession of any information which could be given to the House without injury to the public service as to the means by which the Queen's enemies in the operations on the North-West frontier had obtained possession of the latest arms of precision, and particularly of Lee-Metford magazine rifles and Dum-dum bullets, as reported by Press correspondents.

And, if it was proposed to institute any enquiry into the subject by a Commission armed with special powers to ascertain if any of her Majesty's subjects had been guilty of such traitorous traffic, and if fresh legislation on the subject was necessary either here or in India.

Lord G. HAMILTON: My attention has been given to the subject referred to in the hon. and gallant member's question, and in October last I called for a full report on the description of arms and ammunition found in the possession of the tribesmen. Pending its receipt it would not be in the public interests for me to make any further communication to the House.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.
MR. LAWSON WALTON'S AMENDMENT.
THE WAR BEYOND THE INDIAN FRONTIER.
SPEECHES BY MR. ASQUITH, SIR W. HARCOURT, MR. CURZON, AND MR. BALFOUR.

Mr. ASQUITH, rising amid Opposition cheers, said the noble lord the Secretary of State for India concluded his speech on the previous night by an appeal to the Opposition, and more particularly to the front bench, to enter with him into a species of concordat as to future Indian policy in regard to the Frontier in order that the country might in time to come have a guarantee that, whatever party should be in power, there should be a substantial continuity both of purpose and of method in this perplexed and most perplexing sphere of administration. He was not sure that the earlier part of the noble lord's speech, in which he scolded them up hill and down dale, was altogether calculated to facilitate the object of his peroration. (A laugh.) But speaking for himself, in spite of the vigour of the noble lord's attack, after the lapse of twenty-four hours, he felt practically convalescent. (Laughter.) While there was much in the general principles of frontier policy which the noble lord laid down to which none of the Opposition could take exception, he must express his own opinion that the House of Commons would be abdicating one of its

most serious and responsible functions if at a moment like this it were to confine itself to a merely academic discussion of the future frontier policy. (Opposition cheers.) We were in what might be called a breathing space between two stages of a war, which in spite of the splendid gleams of personal heroism and of regimental discipline which had illuminated it, was in their judgment, and he believed would be accounted in history, in its inception, in its conduct, and in its results one of the most inglorious adventures in the annals of Great Britain (Opposition cheers.) Measured by a merely pecuniary standard, it had already involved our Indian fellow-subjects in an extraordinary expenditure, estimated for the year at no less than 4 000,000 tens of rupees. As regarded that which was still more serious, namely, the expenditure in life and in the effective fighting force of this country and of our Indian army, they knew that in killed and wounded two thousand men had already paid the penalty. What they were entitled to ask, and were bound to demand, was a plain answer to this question, "What was it all for?" (Opposition cheers.) Why, they were told it was nothing more than a spontaneous and unaccountable outbreak of fanaticism, a bolt from the blue, which no one could foresee, and for which no one was to blame. The Opposition did not think it necessary to resort to hypothesis, or miracle, or even accident. On the contrary, they believed, and it was the purpose of the Amendment to ask the House to declare that a large and important contributive factor in bringing about this state of things had been the fatal blundering policy deliberately adopted by Her Majesty's present advisers in the teeth of the decision of their predecessors. (Opposition cheers.) He agreed it was desirable to have continuity of policy, but what the noble lord had done was to defend, perhaps, the most violent reversal of the policy of one Government by another. (Opposition cheers.) The noble lord had not told them what compensation had been got for the advance on Chitral and in the Swat Valley.

Lord G. Hamilton: It is not an advance.

Mr. Asquith: Does the noble lord say it was not an advance?

Lord G. Hamilton: You were there before we went. (Ministerial cheers.)

Mr. Asquith: We were in Chitral, it is true; but Chitral is a dependency of Kashmir, and is under the suzerainty of the Indian Empire. We were never in the Swat Valley, and it is because we declined to go to the Swat Valley that all this misery and trouble have arisen.

Mr. Curzon: You did go.

Mr. Asquith said he should have thought that interruption was really hardly worth making. The late Government went through the Swat Valley under a proclamation by which they bound themselves to return as soon as the object of the expedition was accomplished—(Opposition cheers)—and that was for the purpose of rescuing a British officer in a position of danger. Reference had been made to speeches delivered during the recess, and he confessed he had contributed, perhaps, too freely to the copious rhetoric of an unusually loquacious period. (Laughter.) Though he might not defend every phrase, he adhered to the spirit of all he had said. It had been said that he had accused Lord Elgin of a breach of faith; but so far as he knew, nothing that he had ever said could be construed into a personal attack on the Viceroy of India, who was an old colleague.

Lord G. Hamilton remarked that two or three of Mr. Asquith's speeches had been referred to.

Mr. Asquith replied that only one of his phrases had been quoted He asked the House to believe that nothing could be more contrary to his intention or repugnant to his feelings than to attack the veracity of an old colleague. (Hear. hear.) If in any word he had seemed to convey such an imputation, he would look back upon it with unfeigned regret. (General cheering.) He had always tried to point out that the question whether the Viceroy's proclamation to the natives of the Swat Valley was reconcileable with the action subsequently taken was not a question of intention, but of fact, and it turned very largely on another question—what was the real feeling of the tribes? (Hear, hear.) It had never been seriously denied that to run a military and fortified road from Peshawar to Chitral was, unless excused by something subsequent to the proclamation, a breach of the promise made in that document not to interfere with the independence of the tribes. Who made the road? He did not wish to use disrespectful language, but he could not help saying that of all the puerilities with which a serious topic had been overlaid he could not recall one which, in grotesque and irresponsible levity, could compare with the scholastic levities of Lord G. Hamilton on the making of the Chitral road. (Opposition laughter and cheers.) For nearly three years Lord George boasted that he did it. He said so at least three times in this House.

Lord G. Hamilton: Twice. (Laughter.)

Mr. Asquith was willing to call it twice. Twice in this House, speaking with all the plenitude of his authority as a Minister of the Crown and conscious of having rendered great services to his country —(laughter)—the noble lord told that he was the man who made the road. He repeated the same statement outside. As lately as November 10, 1897, at Acton, he said: "I assented to the construction and maintenance of the road from Peshawar to Chitral." (Hear, hear.) But on the 26th of last month he attended a festive function at Chiswick and used this remarkable language: "The Radical papers have for the last two years assumed that I am responsible for the construction of the road." (Laughter.) Poor Radical papers! Credulous, simple-minded things, they had believed the noble lord. (Laughter.) "But," continued the Secretary for India, "I have kept silent. I like my opponents to commit themselves." (Renewed laughter.) On Monday night he made another statement in this House, showing that quite lately he discovered, on taking down a map or making some casual enquiry in his office, what he had never suspected before—that there were not two roads to Chitral. (Laughter.) Here was one of the most baffling problems in contemporary politics—whether to admire Lord George's subtlety or sympathise with his credulity. Was he a man who, having up his sleeve this card as to who made the road, delivered time after time with marvellous self-control and almost preternatural astuteness statements that he made it, and then when the psychological moment came, at this supper somewhere in the region of Chiswick—(laughter)—suddenly revealed to a startled and bewildered world that all the time we had been living in a delusion, and that his opponents made the road; or was another hypothesis the true one, namely, that he really made the road, and was the simple-minded and credulous person he represented himself on Monday night. (Laughter) Of course, when Sir Robert Low and his army went to the relief of the British besieged in Chitral they made a temporary road. Did the Indian Secretary suppose that in the almost impassable country they had to traverse they did not go by road? Did he think they went by balloon? (Laughter.) That was the only alternative. For a Minister of the Crown to engage during a crisis like the present in such solemn trifling as Lord George had indulged in was not respectful to the House of Commons—(cheers)—nor was it conducive to a solution of the difficulty. The question lying at the root of the matter, whether as regarded the maintenance of the proclamation or the making of the permanent road, was this, did the tribes agree to what the present Government had done? It was said that they had condoned the construction of the road. (Hear, hear.) When the late Ministers were considering this question they were advised by the highest military and civil opinion they could get that any agreement for the making of a permanent road would not be worth the paper it was written on, because it could not represent the deliberate or general opinion of the tribes. (Hear, hear.) Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick was Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. He was one of the ablest officials in the service of the Crown. Why was not his report produced? (Opposition cheers.)

Lord George Hamilton said that if there was nothing in it detrimental to the public service he would publish it.

Mr. Asquith was only sorry that did not occur to the noble lord earlier. (Opposition cheers.) He must also repeat the challenge of Lord Rosebery for the production of Sir Donald Stewart's memorandum. With these two reports before it, the House of Commons would know that the question of a breach of faith being an afterthought was a pure delusion. (Opposition cheers.) Major Deane, on the 13th of June, 1896, reported with reference to the tribe, that "if this people once realise that they are free to do as they think the arrangement for keeping the road open will not remain undisturbed for a fortnight." Those were the people who were supposed to have willingly consented to the arrangements. (Opposition cheers.) The noble lord had said that only ten miles of the road had been attacked. In those ten miles there were two fortified roads held by British and Indian troops, and those two posts were made for that ostentatious and offensive encroachment upon the independence of the native tribes. Major Deane had said that he regarded the outbreak as having been due to the steady and continual working that had been going on since the line had been occupied. (Hear, hear.) It was an outbreak that was first started and intended in June, 1895, when the question of making the road was first mooted, and was no sudden outbreak of fanaticism. How could it be maintained that the explanation of the terrible events of last summer was to be found in an outbreak of fanaticism, when their own official told them that they had been preparing for a long time? (Opposition cheers.) Major Deane said further that it was useless to rely any longer on the good faith of the subsidised levies or the goodwill of their neighbours, and that the levies ought to be replaced as far as possible by men from the British territories. It had been predicted from the first that the Government would be obliged to occupy the whole of this valley, and how was that to be distinguished from annexation, or reconciled to the solemn assurance given in the name of her Majesty's Viceroy, that the Government of India had no intention of permanently occupying any territories through which Umra Khan's misconduct might then have forced them to pass, or to interfere with the independence of the tribes? (Opposition cheers.) He should now like to ask a few questions about the future of Chitral, or, rather, of the Swat Valley. First, he should like to know how many troops were there now. In the second place, supposing Major Deane's suggestion was carried out, and Native levies were dispensed with, how many troops would have to be brought into the valley to take their place? Further, he asked how many more forts would be necessary in the Swat Valley, seeing that even before these disturbances, Major Deane thought the distances between the forts were too great. Then there was the still more important question, how were the Government going to justify the strain upon the resources of India—(hear, hear)—which the internment of so large a number of British and Indian troops in this valley would cause? (Hear, hear.) The noble lord had referred to a speech in which he (Mr. Asquith) had spoken of the inhabitants of the Swat Valley as independent tribes, and had had the temerity to say that the Government had no more right to drive a fortified road through their territory than through the Republic of France. He adhered to that statement. (Opposition cheers.) The noble lord had spoken of what he called the four cardinal points of the forward policy as being due to the initiative of the Liberal Government—Lord Ripon's declaration to the Amir in 1881, the two agreements with Russia, and the Durand agreement of 1893. It was true that every one of these agreements was made under the authority of the Liberal Government, but so far from the agreements with Russia and the Durand agreement with the Amir being in prosecution of a forward policy, they were conceived with an opposite intention—(Opposition cheers)—namely, the removal from the tribal territory of what had been disturbing and irritating causes, tending to British interference. While he did not deny that some frontier tribes might not unnaturally regard the marking of the boundary as an assertion of something like sovereignty over them, he did deny what the noble lord appeared to assume, that the Durand agreement was any assertion on our part of anything in the nature of sovereignty or administrative responsibility. An agreement between two Powers as to a sphere of influence could not affect the natives of the territory—they were not parties to the agreement, and they never surrendered their independence. (Opposition cheers.) To say that an agreement with the Amir that he or the British should not go into certain places, affected the international position of these tribes was equally repugnant to public justice, international law and common sense.

(Opposition cheers.) He entirely demurred to the noble lord's contention that the tribes had ceased to be independent in the only rational sense, and he asked the House to assert not only the apparently academic proposition of the amendment, but, in discharge of the responsibility that lay upon it, while confronted with this situation of war, abnormal expenditure, and prospects of future disturbance, once for all to declare that the occupation of Chitral, and the maintenance of the road thereto were a violation of sound policy, and deserved the condemnation of the Legislature of this country. (Opposition cheers.)

Mr. Curzon.

Mr. Curzon, who on rising was cheered from the Ministerial benches, said the right hon. gentleman who had just sat down did not desire to press the charge of bad faith against Lord Elgin, but he had not withdrawn it as against the Government. It was not true that, in response to orders from home, the Indian Government had made up their opinion on the continued occupation of Chitral. (Ministerial cheers.) On the contrary, they arrived at their decision on independent grounds a month and a half before the present Government came into office. To his (Mr. Curzon's) mind, a much more important question than the charge of breach of faith against the Government was whether the tribes themselves considered that there had been a breach of faith. From August, 1895, when the road was made, to August, 1897, when the outbreak occurred, there was not a single complaint by the tribes of breach of faith. The tribes assented to the making of the road, and supplied levies to guard it, and the majority of these levies remained faithful. Surely it was a rather far-fetched contention that the hostility of these tribes was to be directed against the present Government, whose relations to them had been of a peaceful and non-provocative character for two years, and that no position was to be assigned to the right hon. gentleman (Sir H. Fowler), who forced his way into a country as independent as Switzerland, and killed some 2,000 of the people in the course of the operations—and whom the tribes by no means looked upon as an angel in disguise. (Ministerial cheers and laughter.) He could not entirely understand why a Liberal Government was to be at liberty to drive a road through a free and independent country and slaughter the inhabitants, while a Conservative Government was not to be at liberty to maintain the road. (Ministerial cheers.) He thought the tribes would prefer the Conservative whips to the right hon. gentleman's scorpions. The views he (Mr Curzon) had brought away from Chitral were shared by every civil and military officer who had ever set foot in the country, and though it would be impertinent for him to disparage the great civil and military authorities who had been cited on the other side, he would ask whether any one of them had been within 120 miles of Chitral. If we had not remained in Chitral we should have been guilty of the incredible baseness of leaving those who had taken our side to suffer, and probably to perish. (Ministerial cheers.) He agreed that the natural boundary of India was determined by the stupendous range of mountains called the Hindu Kush, beyond which no sane man would propose to go; but the strategic importance of Chitral was due to the fact that in this great range of mountains there were only two easy passes—one conducting into the heart of Afghanistan, which we had already pledged ourselves to defend, and the other conducting into British India. He admitted that it was not the entry of an invading army that was feared, but the establishment of a hostile influence in Chitral, which could only have a demoralising effect on the entire frontier. (Ministerial cheers.) It was said that all these dangers would be avoided by the agreement concluded with Russia with reference to the Pamirs in 1895. His answer was that they would not. He did not doubt that the Russian Government would observe the obligations into which they had entered on the frontier, but circumstances on the spot would prove too strong to enable them to carry out their intentions. They could not always be sure of frontier officers, Russian or British. (Hear, hear.) Russia had planted her soldiers right up to the waters of the Oxus, and we were equally bound to do the same. The states, of which Chitral was one, were so small that they could not stand by themselves, and if we had left Chitral alone, as right hon. gentlemen opposite proposed to do, it must either have fallen under the control of Afghanistan or Russia, which he believed was desired by neither party in this country. (Hear, hear.) The theory that underlay the whole argument of the mover of the amendment was that all these unhappy risings were due to the Government's original policy in Chitral, but he had not advanced any proof whatever in support of that theory, and it was disproved by the whole of the Blue-book. (Hear, hear.) There was no doubt that the Afridis and the Orakzais had their own grievances, and in the Blue-book would be found a statement of the character of these grievances made by the tribes to the Amír, and repeated by him to her Majesty's Government. But there was no mention either of the Swat road or of Chitral. They had heard something of the Lawrence policy. That was a policy well adapted to the needs of its day, but hon. gentlemen opposite were mistaken if they thought it was equally applicable now. (Hear, hear.) The Leader of the Opposition quoted in the recess the opinion of Lord Lawrence that we should stand behind the mountains and not embroil ourselves with the hostile tribes tenanting them. That was an excellent phrase for a speech, but it did not represent facts. (Hear, hear.) Lord Lawrence's policy was dead. The death blow was dealt by both sides, but notably by those who sat opposite. (Ministerial cheers.) It was Mr. Gladstone's Government who first took us to the mountains, and Mr. Gladstone was the first British Minister to make arrangements with the tribes. The late Secretary of State for India spoke with vehement denunciation of the policy of the late Afghan War, but even Mr. Gladstone, who came into power, determined to reverse the policy of Lord Beaconsfield upon the frontier, only got the length of evacuating Kandahar. No further could he get, circumstances being too powerful for him, and although he desired to tread in the steps of Lord Lawrence he found himself following in the steps of Lord Lytton. (Ministerial cheers.) Along the whole of this prodigious line of frontier Mr. Gladstone adopted a line of policy which, although in his (Mr Curzon's) opinion a good one, was not the policy of Lord Lawrence, and Mr. Gladstone's Government committed this country to obligations of honour and good faith by which every subsequent Government had been held, and which he believed no future Government would ever repudiate. (Ministerial cheers.) That was, no doubt, what Lord Kimberley meant when he said that the whole circumstances had changed, that we had deliberately adopted a more forward policy, and that a Liberal Government was responsible for it. (Ministerial cheers.) There were two other reasons why the Lawrence policy could not be revived. The first was the great change in the external position due to the systematic, and he thought, legitimate advance of Russia, and the second was the effect it would have on India itself. If it were to be logically carried out, and we abandoned positions and engagements with the native people and princes, they would turn against us with contempt for our cowardice. (Ministerial cheers.) He agreed with what was said as to respecting the independence of the tribes and avoiding the occupation of their territory. No one had the slightest desire to annex territory, or destroy the independence of the tribes. But he did not think we could avoid them altogether. However anxious we might be to leave them alone, they would not leave us alone, and if so, what was the policy to be adopted with regard to them? Hon. members opposite advised non-intervention with the tribes. But it was absolutely necessary to have some relations with the tribes, and three things were essential. We must, in the first place have means of communication by the main roads and passes; secondly, we must have control of the foreign relations of the tribes; and thirdly, we must have some assurances for their good conduct, for which we had always been ready to pay them heavy subsidies. Mr. Curzon went on to describe the existing friendly relations of the tribes on the North-West Frontier, and said that he believed within ten years the tribes in the Chitral Valley would be as friendly. But that sort of relationship was not established by withdrawal. It was no doubt well in theory that if, after defeating these people, you withdrew, you would make them your friends, but it was not so in practice. They despised you for your weakness and distrusted you for your inability to protect them. If we were to be successful on the frontier we must select the lines of communication to be kept open, enter into friendly relations with the tribes, guard the roads, safeguard the caravans, and, finally, concentrate our forces instead of diffusing them. We could not afford to leave those tribes alone, but must make friends of them, because we wanted them to wear our uniform, and stand in the front line of our defence in the future. The problem of welding these warlike and turbulent elements into a homogeneous frontier force, was as noble a task as could be devolved upon the shoulders of any statesman, and if, through the sacrifice and the suffering of the recent war, and even through the clash of discordant opinion in that House, they could catch sight of the true principles by which that result might be secured, he believed that all the blood of our heroes would not have been poured out in vain. (Ministerial cheers.)

Sir J. Leese maintained that the blame for the disastrous results of the Frontier policy must rest with those who had deliberately reversed the policy of the late Government. In point of fact he felt that England was bound in this matter to go to the assistance of India.

Sir M. Bhownaggree said that the frontier tribes had no knowledge of civilised life, and had been robbers and murderers through all their existence.

Mr. Harwood believed that the people of Great Britain deeply regretted that the forces of this country have had to be used against foemen who had fought for their freedom so bravely.

Colonel Milward understood that the policy the Government intended to pursue was to maintain a friendly and independent attitude towards the tribes, and to keep open an easy access to Afghanistan. Those were matters far more important than any question affecting the Chitral road.

Mr. Duckworth, in a maiden speech, declared that there was very great opposition in Lancashire to the policy of the Government on the Indian frontier, because it interfered with the successful working of the cotton mills in which many of the working people held shares. They felt that the tendency of that policy was to impoverish the people of India, and so prevent them from being customers. A still stronger opposition was that on moral grounds, the frontier war being regarded as altogether unnecessary and unjust.

Sir Lewis McIver described the several frontier expeditions prosecuted under the late Government in pursuance of their forward policy, which he maintained laid the foundation of the present difficulties. He held that no case of evil-doing had been made out against the Government.

Sir William Harcourt.

Sir Wm. Harcourt, rising amid cheers, said—The controversy, as it was called, between the two front benches had been amply and adequately dealt with, and the Opposition were very well satisfied with the question as it stood. (Opposition cheers.) He would confine his attention to the latter part of Lord George Hamilton's speech, a part of which contrasted very agreeably with that which went before. He agreed with the noble lord that if they could come to some understanding as to the principle upon which the vital and important question of our frontier policy should be hereafter conducted, it would be of great advantage to this country and of immense advantage to the British Empire. (Cheers.) And he hoped in what he was going to say he should not exhibit any desire to repel any agreement which was possible upon such a subject. (Hear, hear.) But general principles were of little value unless they tested them by the application of propositions, and how they would work out. And if he enumerated the propositions of the Secretary of State for India and asked how they should be illustrated in action, he thought he would be proposing a line of argument which it would be useful to adopt. It was an entire mistake to suppose that the Durand agreement altered in any respect the relations between the British power and the independent tribes. The Durand agreement was one between Great Britain and the Amír that neither should

interfere with the other—it was purely negative as regarded non-intervention of the two Powers. But it was perfectly true that that was a matter which would naturally be misunderstood by the tribes, and that should have made everyone extremely careful that nothing was done in the way of occupation that should affirm or increase that suspicion. (Hear, hear.) He entirely agreed with the proposition laid down by the Secretary of State for India that where an advance of the character of the advance on Chitral was concerned it was necessary that the advantages should be such as to amply compensate for the risk and expenditure associated with it. And he asked after what had occurred whether the advantage of the occupation of Chitral was such as to amply compensate for the expenditure associated with it. (Opposition cheers.) As to the statement that we were bound to remain in Chitral whether the balance of advantage was greater or less, or even if it were univerally against us, because they were bound in honour to the Amír to remain—that, like the question of who made the globe, was absolutely a new subject so far as the Government was concerned. It was a remarkable fact that that application of honour, so far as he remembered, had never been put forward before that debate. (Hear, hear.) The despatch of the Secretary of State for India to the Indian Government, in which he decided to reverse the decision of his predecessors, showed that the obligation of honour to remain in Chitral had never occurred to her Majesty's Ministers. It had never been put forward until the last week or two. It was an entirely new invention. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs had delivered an elaborate argument to show that the noble lord was wrong in his decision, and that the Sandeman system ought to be applied to these very districts to which the noble lord said it could not be applied. One of the most culpable and most dangerous features in the whole of these transactions had been the conduct of Sir George White, the Commander-in-Chief He objected to any man in command of the Queen's armies proclaiming his own opinions of a policy without authority from the Government. (Opposition cheers.) His conduct was contrary to the constitution of this country, to the safety of the Empire, and to every precedent in the case of a man of Sir George White's position who understood his duty and acted upon it. (Opposition cheers.) There they had the two voices. They had the Commander-in-Chief in India declaring that peace was impossible with independent tribes, at the very moment that the Government were asking the Opposition to agree with them in measures that would lead to conciliation. (Opposition cheers.) He was surprised that among the papers in the Blue-book there was no telegram or despatch from her Majesty's Government to give assurance to the tribes that Sir George White was not, in that language, declaring the policy of the Government. (Renewed Opposition cheers.) He (Sir W. Harcourt) adhered to the spirit of Lord Lawrence's policy. The Under-Secretary said the Opposition were not entitled to take this line, because they had been the first to cross the mountains. No; they were not the first to cross the mountains: they were the first to retire—(loud Ministerial laughter and ironical cheers)—and their colleagues, the present Duke of Devonshire, and the present Colonial Secretary, were the most active supporters of that policy. (Loud Opposition laughter and cheers.) The Conservative party were the first to cross the mountains, when they went to Kabul, and left their Resident Cavagnari, to be murdered there. The forward policy had been the consequence of that original error. He agreed that the question of interest to the country with which that House ought to occupy itself was the future. What was going to be the attitude of the Government towards the tribes? The noble lord had criticised the use made by the Opposition of the word "independence" of the tribes, but no one had ever used any other expression in dealing with those tribes. The Government had no difficulty in their proclamation, in which gave an assurance to respect the independence of the tribes. When he heard the language used by the noble lord on this subject, he asked across the table, "Do you deny the 'independence'?" and the noble lord replied, "Yes, I deny it." That phrase coming from the Secretary of State would resound along the whole frontier of India. (Ministerial laughter and Opposition cheers.) But the noble lord laid down the proposition that we ought to give conclusive proof that we were most reluctant to interfere with the tribes. The Government did not give such proof when they erected forts in their midst. (Hear, hear.) As regarded any reconciliation of the views of the Opposition with those of right hon. gentlemen opposite, the speech of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs had made matters a great deal worse. They all knew the right hon. gentleman was a bold and adventurous traveller, but he was also a very bold and adventurous statesman. Of all the "forward" school he had always been the most forward, and in his eloquent speech he had not belied his reputation. (Ministerial cheers.) But the policy he had boldly sketched was absolutely inconsistent with any independence of the tribes. It was not even the Punjab policy of the Secretary of State for India. It was an exaggeration of the Chitral policy. In his opinion this war and this policy, whatever it was, had been most fatal in its consequences. It had cost the Indian people 4,000,000 tens of rupees, and he calculated that since the invasion of Afghanistan it had cost the people £70,000,000, in addition to the cost of the enormously increased armies and the withdrawal of men and animals from the culture of the soil. Railway works had to be abandoned, and at this moment we were engaged in a contest of which no one could see the end. He was very sorry to hear the decision of the Government that Great Britain should make no contribution to the cost. That was not a just or generous feeling. The country should know what was the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab on this Chitral policy, and above all they should certainly know the view of the great and talented authority, Sir Donald Stewart, on this question. He understood the noble lord had promised they should have both.

Lord G. Hamilton: No, I can supply Sir Henry Brackenbury's views, but it is quite contrary to the public interest to give—("Oh oh," and Ministerial cheers)—the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief.

Sir W. Harcourt understood then there was no objection to give the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab upon the question of Afghanistan, but there was an objection to give an opinion which was adverse to the Government policy on the question of Chitral. (Opposition cheers.) From the voluminous correspondence, which contained so many things, that opinion was excluded, and the reason had never been satisfactorily explained. If the lessons of the last six months had impressed on anyone the errors which had led to these unfortunate results, he thought they might confidently look to a better future, and whatever might be the division in the lobby that night, it was, at all events, the duty of the Opposition to record their condemnation of the policy of the past, and to put also upon record their opinion of the policy which ought to govern the British Empire in the future. (Opposition cheers.)

Mr. Balfour.

Mr. Balfour, who was received with Ministerial cheers. said he had certainly hoped that at the end of the debate, if not earlier, they might have received from the Opposition some arguments not founded upon purely party and polemical considerations—some views not levelled at the immediate advantage of the moment, some guidance on one of the most difficult problems which the Indian Government had got to deal with—the problem connected with its North-Western frontier. (Ministerial cheers) The speech of the right hon. gentleman had completely shattered these expectations. It was quite true, and he rejoiced to remember it. that the right hon. gentleman did not go back upon some of the disagreeable episodes in the controversy which had raged for six months upon this subject. They had heard nothing from him in the nature of an attack upon her Majesty's Government in regard to any breach of political understanding. But the Leader of the Opposition, carried away by some unfortunate inspiration, had been unable to omit reference to Sir George White, Commander-in-Chief in India. By what unhappy fate did it come about that the Opposition leaders could not avoid attacking the very men whom they themselves had placed in most difficult and responsible situations? (Ministerial cheers.) What was the head and front of Sir George White's offending? He had made a speech in which he used phrases almost totally identical with those used by Sir Robert Peel when dealing with the annexation of Scinde. If nobody did worse than that not much could be said against him. (Hear, hear.) Sir William Harcourt had quoted the Amír on the complaints made to him by the Afridis. The right hon. gentleman, who seemed to think that the Amír was speaking to this amendment—(laughter)—had got it into his head that these men belonged to the tribes who rose in the neighbourhood of the road from Peshawar to Chitral. Their very complaint to the Amír proved that they did not. They complained that the British Government began to make works in their country, then called upon them to pay revenue, and inflicted fines. These things were true of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Samana range. They were not true of the tribes residing near the road from Peshawar to Chitral; therefore they had nothing to do with the controversy whether the Government ought or not to have abandoned Chitral. (Ministerial cheers.) On the vital part of the subject before the House, Sir William Harcourt had given no definite guidance. Nobody denied that the problem on the North-West frontier of India was one of exceeding difficulty and complexity. Gentlemen opposite seemed inclined to interpret the phrase "independence of the tribes" in such a way as would prevent us from making any road through the tribal territories, would preclude us from making any influence over the tribes, and from endeavouring in any way to bring them within the sphere of British influence. That was an impossible policy, inconsistent with our treaty engagements, and not calculated to relieve us from the necessity of punitive expeditions. It would be admitted that when we policed and ruled and taxed certain populations on our North-West frontier, we were bound to see that those populations were protected from predatory inroads. The Leader of the Opposition had quoted Lord Lawrence, but he had not quoted Lord Lawrence's opinion of the tribes in India, nor had he called attention to the policy pursued in Lord Lawrence's time, before his time and subsequent to it in dealing with the predatory incursions of those times. (Hear, hear.) He had referred to the tribes as "hereditary robbers." He (Mr. Balfour) was a lover of milder phrases—(laughter)—and he preferred to say that the views of the tribes on property and homicide were different from the views that prevailed in that House. (Renewed laughter.) The tribes might develop and civilise in the future, but for the present there would always be outbreaks in districts, for the safety of which we were directly responsible, which could not be left unpunished, and which could only be punished by such expeditions as those in which we had been engaged. We had made ourselves responsible on the Durand agreement at all events, to the extent that we could not allow the Amír's peaceful subjects to be attacked by those who lived on our side of the Durand border. (Hear, hear.) It had been stated that there could not be a better safeguard to the Indian frontier than the Indian tribes. He did not believe that anybody who had studied that question could seriously hold that view. The invaders of India had always found a safe entrance into that country through the great passes from Afghanistan to the Valley of the Indus. Were the tribes bound to help us? If they were not bound by loyalty to us they were bound by interest to the invaders. If we could not attach them to our cause, could it be doubted that they would join our opponents. ("Hear, hear," from Mr. S. MacNeill and other Nationalists.) Even the member for Donegal sees the force of that. (Laughter.) It was the first time in his life that he had succeeded in driving a point into the hon member. (Laughter.) If he had succeeded with the hon. member he was sure that he had not failed anywhere else. (Loud laughter.) He maintained that in the hour of danger the tribes would be found not in our ranks, but in the ranks of our opponents. The policy which her Majesty's Government suggested was the policy of the late Secretary for India and the noble lord who preceded him in office. They had entertained none of the fantastic notions which the two right hon. gentlemen opposite appeared to cherish. The division in opinion was not as to whether they should interfere with tribal customs and prejudices;

on that point they were all agreed. Where they differed was as to the policy of absolute abstention, except by means of punitive expeditions or the modified form of control and influence, which Lord Kimberley and the late Secretary for India had alike recommended. He did not pretend that the policy was without difficulties. He did not hold out the slightest hope that they could avoid complications. Complications had not been avoided by their predecessors, nor would they be avoided by their successors. But he did look forward to the time when the task which had been so successfully accomplished to the south and to the north of this distressed district, might gradually, slowly, and cautiously, but not unsuccessfully, be extended further and further among these border tribes. He did not suppose he could interpret this ambiguous amendment as being a support of that policy, but he was convinced that it was a policy which the majority of the House, and certainly the right hon. gentleman the member for the Forest of Dean, and others on that side, held as firmly as the Government did—and as firmly as the right hon. gentleman the late Secretary for India held it. But was it not manifest on the face of the amendment, and doubly manifest from the speeches by which it had been supported, that it owed its origin to two sources? The first source was the irritation with which right hon. gentlemen opposite saw, or thought they saw, that their policy of 1895 had been reversed by their successors in office. Then it had been suggested that, drunk with victory, the Government came to the consideration of this question, determined at all costs, and at any sacrifice of public policy to reverse the conclusions at which their predecessors had arrived. He could assure the House that a less historical account of what occurred could not well be imagined. In the first place, the policy of the late Government had not been a settled or concluded policy at all. (Hear, hear.) The situation in which they had left the question was this: They had told the Indian Government that they meant to leave Chitral, and had requested that Government to suggest a general plan by which that object could be carried out. But before that plan could be considered the stroke of fate fell, and right hon. gentlemen opposite never had the chance of considering the necessary alternative to their decision. The Government, therefore, came into an uncompleted policy, and had to consider not merely the decision of the right hon. gentleman to leave Chitral, but the alternative which the Indian Government had suggested to that policy; and it was on the balance of these two things, and for other considerations, that they reluctantly came to the conclusion that the original decision of the right hon. gentleman opposite had to be abandoned. If ever there was a party which ought to look with tolerance on the reversal of an Indian frontier policy by a succeeding Government, it was the party represented by the right hon. gentleman opposite—(Ministerial cheers)—for they boasted of having reversed Lord Beaconsfield's policy in 1880. That reversal turned out to be largely a reversal in name and not in fact—(Ministerial laughter)—for they found themselves, when face to face with the realities of the situation, bound to accept at least nine-tenths of that policy. It was not for them to complain of a similar course being taken by their successors. The right hon. gentleman concluded as follows: But there is another origin of this amendment. Evidently it was felt that the speeches made in the autumn required to be backed up by action in the House. (Ministerial cheers and laughter.) Could the platform records have been expunged, could the memories of men have been cleared of these incessantly-recurring party attacks upon one particular fragment of this frontier policy, we never should have seen this amendment at all. (Ministerial cheers.) It is not intended to help a decision of this question; it is not framed to assist this or any other Government to a rational solution of these great difficulties. But I venture to hope that, however little the amendment may have been framed for that object, at all events some of the speeches that have been delivered will tend to show the class of difficulties with which we have to deal, and may help those who are less influenced by party considerations and more influenced by the great responsibilities of Empire, to treat in future in a moderate, a conciliatory, and a statesmanlike manner what is, perhaps, the greatest perennial difficulty with which our Indian Empire has ever had to deal. (Ministerial cheers.)

The House divided:

For the amendment	208
Against	311—103

The figures were hailed with Opposition cheers.

Thursday, February 17.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

RETURNS GRANTED.

On the motion of Sir James Fergusson, a Return was granted showing the marching-out (field) strength of each battalion of British infantry detailed for service in the recent operations on the North-West frontier of India; of the number of non-commissioned officers and men left behind in quarters; and of the actual number who joined the field force and engaged in active operations.

On the motion of Sir James Fergusson, in pursuance of the Return of non-commissioned officers and men left behind by the battalions of British infantry detailed for service in the recent operations on the North-West frontier of India, a Return for statement of the reasons for the retention in quarters of such non-commissioned officers and men.

THE NEW LAW OF SEDITION.

Sir William Wedderburn asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been drawn to the general disapproval and alarm excited in India by the proposed changes in the law of sedition, as shown by the fact that more than thirty public bodies, European and Indian, had protested against the proposed changes:

Whether these protesting bodies included the Calcutta Bar, which consisted chiefly of Englishmen:

Whether, according to present arrangements, the Government of India proposed to pass the measure into law within a few days from the present date:

And whether, in view of the gravity of the matter, he would secure that the Bill should not become law until the House of Commons had had an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon its provisions.

Lord G. Hamilton: The Bills to which the honourable baronet's question refers were introduced into the Legislative Council more than eight weeks ago. No information has reached me confirming the allegations of the first question. On the contrary, from what I hear I believe the opposition to the measure to be confined to a very limited class of the community. The Calcutta Bar does not consist chiefly of Englishmen; and, if a protest has been submitted by that Bar, I am unaware by what proportion of its members such protest has been signed. According to the telegrams which have reached me, the Penal Code Amendments will be considered to-morrow in the Legislative Council. The Procedure Code Amendments have not yet been reported, so far as I know, by the Select Committee to whom they were referred.

I have no intention of asking the Government of India to postpone the consideration of these measures. If they should pass into law, the power of allowing or disallowing them is vested in the Crown, and I am in no sense disposed to shirk responsibility for any advice which I may give to her Majesty on this subject.

THE FAMINE COMMISSION.

Sir William Wedderburn asked the Secretary of State for India whether he would lay upon the Table of the House the terms of reference to the Famine Commission, which began its sittings in Calcutta last month.

Lord G. Hamilton: Yes, I will lay the correspondence between the Secretary of State in Council and the Government of India on the subject upon the Table of the House.

The terms of reference to the Commission will be found in it.

THE INDIAN MINTS.

Sir William Houldsworth asked the Secretary of State for India whether any reply had been sent by the India Office to the despatch of the Government of India, dated September 16 of last year, on the re-opening of the Indian mints:

And whether any correspondence on that subject had taken place since that date; and, if so, whether he had any objection to lay such correspondence upon the Table.

Lord G. Hamilton: A telegram and a short despatch were sent in reply to the letter of the Government of India, dated September 16, 1897, on the proposal to re-open the mints. If my hon. friend will move that they be presented, I shall offer no objection. No further correspondence has passed on the subject.

CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK.

Thursday, February 10.—In the House of Commons Mr. Davitt's amendment to the Address relative to the existing distress in Ireland was rejected by 235 to 153. Mr. Joseph A. Pease next submitted an amendment expressing regret, that having regard to the assurances given as to the abolition of slavery throughout the Zanzibar Protectorate, no efficient action appeared yet to have been taken to this end. After an interesting debate, in which Sir W. Harcourt and Mr. Balfour took part, the amendment was negatived by 181 to 120.

Friday, February 11.—In the House of Commons Mr. John Redmond moved his amendment to the Address, declaring in favour of an independent Parliament for Ireland and an Executive responsible thereto. Mr. Dillon stated that he should support the amendment though it was opposed to the policy of Mr. Parnell. Upon a division the amendment was defeated by 233 votes to 65. The claims of Wales were afterwards urged in an amendment which was rejected by a majority of 39—129 to 90. Mr. W. Redmond next submitted an amendment dealing with prisoners convicted under the Treason Felony Act. This was in turn defeated by 152 to 100.

Monday, February 14.—For the greater part of the sitting the House of Commons was occupied with Mr. Lawson Walton's amendment condemning the military policy beyond the North-West frontier. The debate is reported elsewhere.

Tuesday, February 15.—In the House of Commons the debate on Mr. Walton's amendment was continued.

Mr. Asquith, speaking at the Eighty Club, dealt with the question of the reform of the House of Lords, and said that so long as the present constitutional conditions existed, no Liberal legislation, however prudent or conversant with the wishes and needs of the great majority of the people, had the least chance of passing into law except in a mutilated shape, while any Conservative measure, no matter how novel its principles or revolutionary its ultimate development, passed with oiled castors through what would have been to the Liberals an irresistible obstacle. That was a state of things to which his party must put an end as speedily and as effectually as possible.

Wednesday, February 16.—Mr. Dillon's amendment to the Address on the subject of an Irish Roman Catholic University was moved in the House of Commons, and the subject was under discussion when the House adjourned.

A substantial increase to the Liberal majority was made known at Haverfordwest, when the result of the polling for Pembrokeshire was declared. The total of the votes cast for Mr. Wynford Philipps, 5,070, was the largest known in the history of the constituency, and the majority 1,670 compared with 580 secured by Mr. Rees Davies at the last general election.

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